



# BOB HANSON TENDERFOOT

RUSSELL GORDON CARTER





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ONE NIGHT BOB WAS SITTING BEFORE THE CAMP-FIRE.



# BOB HANSON TENDERFOOT

BY

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AND

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Illustrated by S. GORDON SMYTH



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**Bob Hanson, Tenderfoot**



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## Introduction

A STURDY American boy and his friends in the Cedarville Troop No. 1 of the Boy Scouts furnish the interest for this series of stories.

You will like impulsive Bob Hanson, even if at first he did think the Scouts were rowdies who wasted their time on woodcraft. You will like quiet Fred Ashleigh, who induces Bob to go to the scout camp as an outsider. You will like energetic Reddy McTurk quite as well as Bob came to like him before the end of the summer. And you will laugh at the Egg's funny antics as heartily as Bob did.

In the company of such capable and fun-loving boys as Fred, Reddy and the Egg, Bob not only enjoys his vacation at Glen Gray but learns the many interesting events in the daily life of the Scouts. He also learns to take care of himself, and the knowledge proves valuable. Before they return to Cedarville, Bob and Fred meet with an adventure that even three years later thrills them whenever they think of it.

Why Bob changes his opinion of the Scouts and decides to undergo the impressive ceremony that makes him a tenderfoot will be obvious to everyone who loves the comradeship of good fellows and the clean life and vigor of the great out-of-doors.



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Bob Hanson, Tenderfoot





# Bob Hanson, Tenderfoot

## CHAPTER I

### VACATION PLANS

IT was lunch hour at the Cedarville High School. The fierce rays of the noonday sun beat down relentlessly against the hard sidewalk in front of the building. On the grass in the rear of the school it was shady and cool, however, and here were gathered small groups of boys waiting for the afternoon session to begin. Some of them romped and wrestled on the soft grass, filling the air with shouts and laughter. Others stretched themselves at full length, munching apples or peanuts. A few of the more industrious were putting finishing touches on afternoon lessons, apparently undisturbed by the noise about them. On the tennis courts near by a doubles match was in progress, and every now and then a wild ball would fall among the loungers on the grass



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and be thrown back in response to the calls of the players.

Seated by himself, at some distance from the other boys, Bob Hanson held a bag of peanuts in his hand and from time to time munched one lazily. He was a sturdy, well-built boy of fourteen, with a frank, open, sunburned face, blue eyes, and a shock of thick, light-brown hair. Occasionally he knit his brows and struck the grass almost savagely with the heel of his shoe.

Bob was in a bad humor, for his world was distinctly upset. Here it was the middle of June, and the end of school only ten days off, and no plans had been made for the summer. It was the first time within his remembrance that his coming vacation seemed uncertain. Generally as soon as school had closed he had hurried off somewhere on a delightful trip. One summer he had gone with his father to a fishing camp in the Adirondacks to spend several weeks living in the open, fishing for trout in the lakes or brooks, tramping through the beautiful woods and climbing rugged mountains. Another year he had gone to the seashore, where he had enjoyed himself swimming, sailing and canoeing. Always it had been something interesting. And when he



tired of one thing there had always been something new to turn to. But now things were different.

A fortnight ago, Bob's father had been called to Washington on important Government work, and only this morning a letter had come from him saying that he expected to remain there indefinitely. His mother was very busy with reconstruction work, together with the task of winding up the business of the local Red Cross Chapter she had organized. In reply to Bob's anxious inquiry as to the summer she had said that she would have to stay at home. "People are too busy with after-the-war duties this summer to be able to spend their time in play," she explained.

"But Mother," protested Bob, "why can't I go up to the Adirondacks without Father? Old Ran will be there, won't he? And Manuel? I could get along all right even if Father is in Washington."

But his mother shook her head. "No, Ran won't be there this year. He is still with the Army of Occupation and has decided to remain in the service; the last I heard of Manuel he was cooking for a New York hotel."



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It was indeed a dreary prospect that Bob saw ahead of him as he sat there on the grass behind the High School. His thoughts were suddenly interrupted when someone called his name. Looking up he saw it was Fred Ashleigh walking toward him.

"Hello, Fred, sit down and have some peanuts." Bob offered him the bag.

"Thanks!" replied Fred, helping himself to a handful. "Well, it's almost over, isn't it?" he said with a smile.

"What's over?" asked Bob.

"The school year," replied Fred. "In ten days vacation will be here, and we can all beat it to the woods."

Bob shook his head disconsolately. "No such luck for me, I'm afraid. My plans are all shot to pieces. Dad's in Washington and will probably stay there all summer. Mother's busy with Red Cross and reconstruction work and expects to stick right here on the job. So where do I come in? No fishing in the Adirondacks, no sailing at the seashore—nothing to do but hang around here all summer."

Fred smiled. "You're taking it pretty hard, aren't you? I've never been to the Adirondacks



in my life, and I haven't often been to the seashore. Still I've managed to make out pretty well in spite of that."

"Nothing doing around here," continued Bob. "It's a regular graveyard."

"Well, you don't have to stay here," replied Fred. "I don't intend to."

"What are you going to do?" asked Bob with some interest.

"I'm going to beat it for the Scout camp first of July." Fred's eyes sparkled in anticipation.

"But I'm not a Scout," protested Bob. "I couldn't go there."

"That doesn't make any difference. Come along anyway. The camp's at Glen Gray and it's a peach of a quiet little spot. Study up for your exams as a Tenderfoot and take them at the camp. That'll be easy."

Bob was about to reply but quickly checked himself. He didn't quite like to say what was in his mind for fear of offending Fred. Thoughtfully he crushed a peanut shell in his fingers. "I'm not sure that I want to be a Scout," he replied after a long pause.

"I'm surprised to hear you say that," declared Fred impulsively. "Why not?"



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Bob was silent again for a minute or two; then he answered somewhat hesitatingly, "Well, you see, Fred, if all the Scouts were like you, it wouldn't take me two minutes to decide, but the trouble is ——" Here he broke off abruptly and coughed to hide his embarrassment.

"The trouble is what?" asked Fred, looking directly at him.

"It's—it's not easy to explain, but the fact is so many of the fellows in the Scouts are—well, not exactly my sort. I guess they are all right in a way, but some of them are rather—well, they're 'rubes,' you know."

Fred was tempted to make an angry reply, but with an effort he kept control of his tongue, and immediately he was glad. After all, here was a chance to help a friend and also help the Scouts. He was aware that there was a prejudice against the Scouts among a certain set of boys at school. He had often heard his friends sneered at as "rough necks"; and he had noticed that nearly always the sneers came from boys who had no influence at school, except perhaps in a social way. They were idlers, who accomplished little in their studies or in the school sports; and they had formed a little group who



kept mostly to themselves, and who boasted openly of getting poor marks in their studies. They referred to the teachers as "poor simps" or "old maids," and seemed to consider that the chief object in life was to have a "good time." In their opinion a "good time" seemed to consist in some form of idling. After school they frequented the drug-stores, drinking soda-water or smoking cigarettes; at night they could always be found at the "movies." Fred knew that Bob had some friends in this set and was inclined to spend much of his time with them. Still he had always thought there was good stuff in Bob and therefore he welcomed this chance to have a frank talk with him.

"I know what you mean, Bob," he said, speaking slowly and weighing his words carefully. "Lots of the fellows in the Scouts aren't what you would call showy. Very few of them have rich fathers or live in big houses, with automobiles and horses and servants and that sort of thing. But after all that's nothing against them. The real test of the fellows who are Scouts is how they stand in school. Who are the fellows that get the best marks? I think you'll find that most of them are Scouts. Who are the best athletes?



Who are the fellows that are really holding the most important jobs and doing the real work of the school? Why, they are Scouts in every case."

Bob had never had the thing put to him in just this way before. He was silent for several moments as he thoughtfully broke open a peanut. At length he said slowly, "I never thought of it that way before; the Scouts do seem to get good marks, and I guess there's no doubt that they take most of the prizes in athletics."

Seeing that he was influencing Bob, Fred hastened to follow up his advantage. "I tell you what it is, Bob," he said, "I'm sure that if you came up to the Scout camp and tried it for a week you'd want to stay longer. And after you got to know the fellows better you'd want to be a Scout yourself."

"But could I really go to the camp without being a Scout?" asked Bob in surprise.

"Sure thing!" replied Fred. "There are always a few fellows at camp who don't belong. They generally take their exams and become Scouts before they leave, though, and that's what you would do. I'm sure you would."

"Well, I'll think it over and let you know."



I've got to make some kind of an arrangement pretty soon, and what you say sounds rather interesting," said Bob. Fred's enthusiasm had not been without its effect.

At this point in the conversation the school bell rang and the boys went back into the building.

From time to time that afternoon Bob thought of his talk with Fred. His friend's earnestness had impressed him more than anything else. He admired him a great deal; for he knew him to be an excellent student, though not a "grind," and also an athlete of more than average ability. Decidedly Fred Ashleigh was neither a "rube" nor a "rough neck." If the rest of the Scouts were like him, Bob felt he would certainly enjoy knowing them. What other boys were there in school who were Scouts, he asked himself? There was Tommy Fielder, the first baseman on the nine. His father was only a policeman, but Tommy was a clean, honest fellow with a sunny disposition. Nobody could say a word against him. Then there was Eddy Braley, the best ball player in school; certainly he was not a "rube." One after another Bob named them over and was forced to acknowledge that most of them were



boys who were really doing things in school. He could not think of an idler among them.

That night at dinner he again brought up the matter of a summer vacation.

"Mother," he said, "I've been thinking it over, and I believe I'd like to go to the Scout camp for a while just to see what it's like."

His mother looked up from her knitting in surprise. "Why, Bob! I thought you didn't care much about the Scouts," she exclaimed.

"Well, I didn't," he admitted smiling, "but I've been talking with Fred Ashleigh about it, and I've decided that I should like to try a week or two at the camp just for the fun of it. If I don't like it I shan't have to stay."

His mother reflected a minute or two. "Well, I've no objection, my son, and I know your father would not have any," she said. "You talk the matter over with Fred and find out what you will need for an outfit."

As a matter of fact Mrs. Hanson was greatly pleased. She had been worried about her son's vacation, and the Scout camp seemed likely to solve the summer problem very well, provided Bob liked it, of course. As for Bob he could scarcely wait for morning. After dinner



he hurried to the telephone and called Fred up.

"Say," he said, "I've spoken to Mother and she says I can go."

"Go where?" came back Fred's puzzled voice.

"To the Scout camp. Don't you remember what we were talking about this noon?"

"Oh, yes! Of course I remember. Well, that's certainly fine. I didn't expect to have you decide so soon."

"I'll talk with you about it to-morrow. I've got lots of questions to ask." Bob's voice betrayed his eagerness.

"All right, I'll try and answer them. It's bully to know that you can go."

And so Bob Hanson had made a decision that was to have a most important influence on his life, a decision that promised fun, excitement and a little danger, to say nothing of a new interest in the better things of life.

## CHAPTER II

### GETTING UNDER WAY

THE next two weeks passed rapidly for Bob Hanson. The final examinations at the High School called for some extra attention, but they were at last disposed of, not with high honors, but with passing grades in every subject. There was the final baseball game of the year with the Newtown High School, Cedarville's old rival, at which Bob acted as cheer leader for his class and yelled himself hoarse over the clean-cut victory for his team. There were also graduating exercises for the older boys and girls, but as Bob was only a freshman these did not affect him. At the end of a fortnight his school duties were over and there was nothing of immediate necessity that demanded his attention. Bob heaved a deep sigh of relief.

"Now," he said to himself, "if I am going up to the Scout camp I must get together an outfit,



and I tell you, Joe Miller,"—Joe Miller was the name that Bob always gave himself in his soliloquies—"I'm going to have an outfit that will make those Scouts sit up and take notice."

Foolishly he would not ask Fred Ashleigh for any advice about his camp equipment. "I guess I've camped out enough not to need any advice on that point from a Scout," he said to himself. "I've been in the Adirondacks with Dad and I know what I ought to take. So I won't say a word to Fred. I'll turn up at camp with my outfit and surprise him."

At this idea Bob chuckled. He would show Fred that he knew a thing or two about camping. He would get together a crackerjack outfit and not say a word about it. Then he would watch Fred and the other fellows open their eyes. "Ha, ha! Joe Miller," he laughed to himself, "we'll show them that we know a thing or two even if we aren't Scouts."

When he mentioned the matter to his mother she told him to go in to Twombly's, the big New York sporting outfitter, where his father always bought his supplies, and get whatever he needed. "Have it charged," she said, supposing that her son had consulted with Fred about his needs.



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So Bob spent a whole morning selecting an outfit with the greatest care. First he picked out the very latest and best-approved pattern of wall tent made of some sort of pale-green, water-proof material with sliding windows of ising-glass. Next came a folding cot with a beautiful sleeping bag of water-proof canvas lined with heavy woolen blankets. A folding table, chairs, electric lantern, a sheet-iron stove with cooking utensils of aluminum, an axe and a compact camp chest were quickly added to his supply. Here Bob paused. Was there anything else that he needed? He had a hatchet, a hunting knife, a compass, a good fishing-rod and a landing net. Perhaps he had better buy a little additional tackle. He had rubber boots, three flannel shirts, two sweaters and a poncho, so that he did not have to buy new ones. "Well, Joe Miller," he declared, "I guess you're about fixed up." Then all at once he remembered that there was a lake at the camp. "Gee!" he exclaimed, "I pretty nearly forgot the most important thing. Of course I've got to have a canoe." After listening to a great deal of advice from the salesman, he selected a seventeen foot canvas canoe. It was a beauty, painted a bright green, with an Indian's head on each



side of the bow. Then he bought a jointed mast, a sail, a pair of sideboards and a rudder, in order that he might use the canoe for sailing if he wished.

"There, Joe Miller," he said to himself, when this part of his task was completed, "I guess we're about through. And I rather think we have an outfit that will beat anything ever seen at the Scout camp. We'll just watch their eyes stick out when they see our stuff."

Bob was highly pleased with himself. He had his outfit sent home and stored in the garage; his mother smiled but said nothing. He was careful not to let any of his boy friends see it. "We must surprise them, Joe Miller," he said.

A few days later Fred Ashleigh hailed Bob on the street. "Hello!" he called. "How are you going up to camp?"

"Why, I had thought of having our chauffeur take me up in the car," replied Bob.

"Oh, don't do that," said Fred. "Why not go along in the real Scout way?"

"How's that?"

"Why, we all go up in the Ark."

"The Ark?" asked Bob, looking puzzled.

Fred laughed. "Oh, I forgot that you



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wouldn't know, not being a Scout. The Ark is the nickname we give to Mr. Callahan's big motor bus. He takes us up to camp every year and brings supplies to us once a week. You come along with the boys; it will be twice as much fun."

Bob began to have doubts about his elaborate outfit. "How do you get your stuff up there?" he asked.

"Oh, that's all right. We have a trailer that we pull along behind. If there's anything that we can't pile on, we can usually get a tin Lizzie or two to help out."

"Well, I suppose that's the best way to go," said Bob slowly. He wished he had not bought so much equipment.

"Sure thing! Have your stuff down at Scout Headquarters by nine o'clock sharp Wednesday morning and go along with us. You know where that is, don't you? It's in Javrins Block; you can't miss it. You'll hear us yelling a mile away. Don't be late."

"All right! I'll be on time." Bob wondered how he could possibly wait for Wednesday. There was something very contagious in Fred's enthusiasm. After all that would be the best way to go. It would give him a chance to meet



more of the boys and it would be pleasant just to have Fred with him.

A few doors farther along the street Bob started to enter the drug-store to get a supply of court-plaster and some fly cream. Leaning against the wall near the door smoking cigarettes were three or four of his high school acquaintances. Bob nodded to them cordially.

"What's this I hear about your being a Scout?" asked one of them, lighting a match.

"Well, what do you hear?" asked Bob a little uneasily. He dreaded the thought of being laughed at.

"We hear you're going to join the 'rough-neck' brigade up at the Scout camp," said a fat, red-faced boy with a sneer. "Didn't think that of you, Bob. I always thought you were one of us."

"I don't know what you mean by rough-neck brigade," replied Bob quietly. "But it's true that I'm planning to go up to the Scout camp for a week or two. If I like it maybe I shall stay longer."

"Ho! ho! You'll come back with your knees bare and a red bandanna for a necktie, I'll bet a jitney," shouted the boy who had spoken first.



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Bob flushed, but tried not to show his annoyance.

"Come up and see me as soon as I get settled," he suggested pleasantly. "Come and stay a couple of weeks and see if you like it."

"Listen to him!" shouted the red-faced boy. "Imagine me going round bare-legged like my kid brother and jumping up and saluting every time I met one of those long-faced schoolmasters—scoutmasters—is that what you call 'em? Not on your life!"

"Well, I couldn't blame *you* for not wanting to go round bare-legged, Nellie," laughed Bob. "You certainly would be a picture in shorts."

At this the other boys raised a shout of laughter and "Nellie" Paynter, the fat boy, grew redder than ever. While the other boys were rallying each other, Ted Patrick, who up to this point had not spoken, took Bob by the arm and led him to one side.

"Say, Bob," he began earnestly in a low voice, "I hope you aren't really thinking of joining the Scouts."

"Well, Ted, I don't know. Maybe I won't. I haven't made up my mind yet. It will depend



a good deal on how I like the looks of things up at the camp."

"Well, don't hurry; you know you don't want to queer yourself socially. If you get in too thick with that Scout crowd it might hurt your chance of making a good frat."

Bob looked a little uncomfortable. "Do you really think so?" he asked.

"I sure do. If you'll take notice you'll find that there are no Scouts in any of the frats. They don't count for anything socially. So be careful."

"Thanks, Ted," replied Bob. "I'll remember what you say. Meanwhile, come up and see me after I've got settled."

Ted Patrick made no reply to this and Bob hurried up the street. He was rather worried at what Ted had told him, for it had been his ambition ever since he had entered high school to join one of the fraternities.

That night before falling asleep he thought long and seriously about the matter. Was it true that if he became a Scout he would not amount to anything socially? He named over to himself the Scouts he knew, and had to admit that there was not one of them who was not a

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clean, agreeable fellow; but none of them were frat members. Still, there wasn't a finer boy in school than Fred Ashleigh; and if it came to choosing between him and Ted Patrick, he should choose Fred. Nevertheless, Ted Patrick and his friends had always treated him nicely and seemed to welcome his company. They doubtless had their good points, too, he told himself. This was the first time that Bob had ever compared the Scouts with his old friends and he was frankly puzzled. Well, he should soon find out if the Scouts really were good fellows. "If I don't like it at camp, I'll make tracks for home," he said half aloud.



## CHAPTER III

### OFF FOR THE CAMP

ON Wednesday morning the street in front of Scout Headquarters was a scene of noisy confusion. Beside the curb in front of the main entrance to the building stood the Ark, a huge, clumsy motor bus that would seat nearly twenty-five boys. Behind it a small, open cart was piled high with baggage of all sorts, and near by two dilapidated motor cars were drawn up to accommodate any overflow of passengers and baggage. The sidewalk was cluttered with tents, blankets, cots, duffle bags, baskets, and packages of every conceivable size and shape. Boys of all ages swarmed about the baggage, yelling, shouting, and laughing. It never seemed to occur to anybody to speak in an ordinary tone of voice. Everybody shouted to each other as if the whole world were deaf. The boys were of various sizes, but they were alike in one respect—nearly all of them wore the Scout uniform. Khaki shirts,



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and shorts, showing bare knees above black or khaki-colored stockings, red bandannas knotted loosely about the neck, and felt hats gave them an appearance of military uniformity. They were a fine-looking gathering of American boys, as more than one person remarked that morning, and their eyes shone with the thoughts of a summer in the woods.

In spite of the uproar there was a certain orderliness about the whole proceeding. Sam Callahan, the garage keeper and the proud owner of the Ark, was superintending the loading of the trailer, while from time to time, Mr. McGregor, the Scout Commissioner, appeared to consult with a boy or with his anxious parents about some question of importance that had come up at the last moment. Fred Ashleigh was very busy making himself useful. As a patrol leader and headquarters bugler, he occupied a position of some influence. He devoted most of his time giving advice and assistance to the younger boys.

In the midst of the confusion a motor car drove up and Bob Hanson jumped out. Fred shouted as soon as he caught sight of him.

“Hello, Bob! It’s fine to see you. Where’s your stuff?”



"Coming," answered Bob with a grand sweep of his arm. He had hardly spoken when a large motor truck appeared with his elaborate outfit.

Fred stared in amazement. All work stopped. The other boys ceased shouting as the men in charge of the truck started to unload the canoe and the various bundles, bags and boxes.

"Some junk, eh!" exclaimed one of the boys at last. "Wonder if he's going to open a store?"

"Gee! How large is his party?" inquired another.

"Must be going to make a long stay," commented a third loudly.

Bob's face grew red and he looked at Fred inquiringly. Fred barely smothered an inclination to laugh with the rest. "Well, now, that's fine, Bob," he said in a casual manner. "I'm mighty glad you're going to take a canoe with you. You'll find plenty of use for it on the lake. But let me see; we'll never get all your stuff on the trailer."

That was perfectly evident. The trailer was already piled high with baggage. At a pinch a place might be found for everything but the canoe.



"Why not get the truckman to carry your stuff right up to the camp?" he suggested.

"That will be the best way, no doubt," replied Bob, feeling very uncomfortable. "Maybe I brought too much." And that was the way it was settled. The truckmen were good-natured about it.

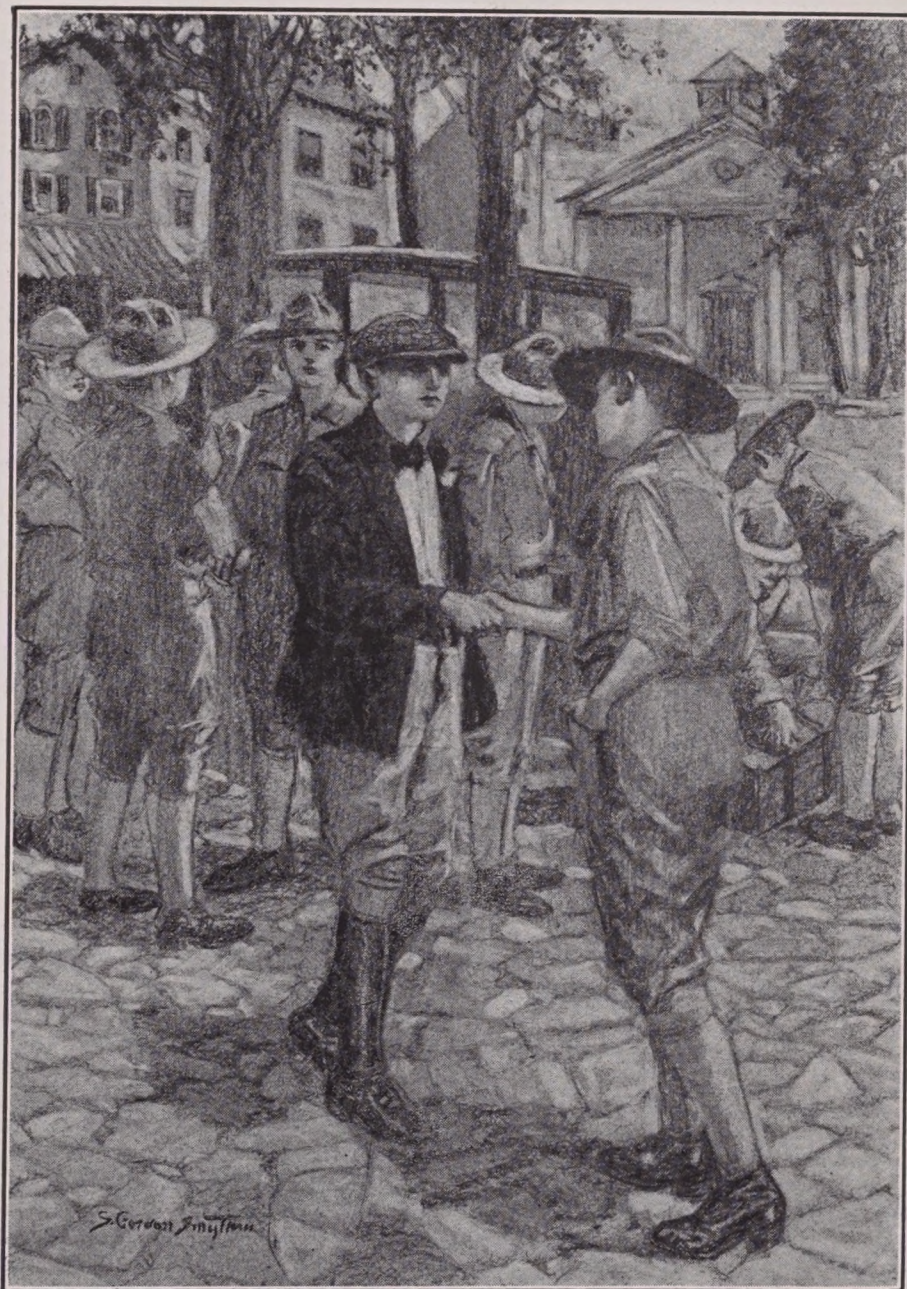
During the next half hour while he waited for the Ark to start Bob had to endure the curious stares of the other boys and listen to a little pleasant fun at his expense.

"See that swell guy over there?" he overheard one boy say. "He has to have a special express train to take his stuff up to the camp."

"Gee! Is that so?" came the reply in a surprised tone of voice. "What's his name? Vincent Astorbilt?"

Bob was greatly relieved when the last piece of baggage was packed on the trailer and all the boys were seated on the truck. Then there was a pause and he wondered if something had gone wrong. In a moment, however, Mr. McGregor appeared from around the corner. Taking a final look at the loaded machines he gave a command in a low voice to Fred. At once the vibrant notes of the Assembly rang out on Fred's bugle.





“WHAT’S HIS NAME, VINCENT ASTORBILT?”





As the last echoes died away, the motors purred, and the machines leaped forward. They were off for camp!

The ride that followed was delightful. For several miles the road wound through beautiful farming country interspersed with stretches of woodland. In some places great patches of Indian corn lined the road on both sides; in others there were acres of low-growing potato plants stretching away over the fields. After a time the busses climbed a long hill from which the boys could see the country for miles and miles. The view was magnificent. All along the northern horizon the rugged outlines of a range of mountains rose sharply against the sky. Away to the left a lake, half hidden by wooded hills, shimmered in the morning sunlight.

"Gee!" exclaimed Bob with admiration, "I've never seen anything in the Adirondacks prettier than this."

Fred Ashleigh smiled. "We'll show you other things just as surprising before we get through with you, Bob. You're only at the beginning. Those are the Ramapo Mountains that you see," he continued, pointing at the distant peaks. "The Scout camp is just in the edge of the foot-



hills and about eight miles away as the crow flies."

An hour later the Ark stopped at the foot of a little glen. Here they all clambered to the ground and ran and jumped about to take the kinks out of their joints. Bob looked around expectantly.

"Where is the camp?" he asked.

"Oh! The camp isn't here," answered Fred. "It's half a mile up the glen. We have to walk in and tote our stuff."

Bob thought dismally of all his heavy baggage. The sun was almost overhead now and it was decided to eat lunch before undertaking the strenuous work. So the boys threw themselves down on the soft grass and opened their lunch boxes. Fortunately there was cool water to drink from a spring in the deserted garden of a tumble-down farmhouse near by. Lunch was eaten amid shouts of laughter.

"Gee, what an appetite I have!" exclaimed Bob. "I've eaten up every blessed thing I brought."

Fred laughed. "You're starting out all right to be a good Scout," he said. "All Scouts have fine appetites."



When lunch was over the boys set to work to tote their belongings to the camp-site farther up the glen. It was a scorching hot July day, and the up-hill walk over the narrow trail was difficult; and not one trip but several, were necessary to bring in all their belongings. A number of his new friends gave Bob a hand with his canoe. Bob followed the example set by some of the older boys and stripped to the waist. This made him feel more comfortable, at first, but before he realized it, his neck and arms were painfully sunburned.

At last everything was transported up the glen and the trucks were sent back. The headquarters tent and the supply tent were pitched, and the boys began to raise their own smaller tents. They were in the midst of this work when the sky became suddenly overcast. Then, almost without warning, rain began to fall in torrents. There was a general stampede for cover. The boys who had not had time to pitch their own tents took shelter in those of their luckier comrades; blankets and other belongings were hastily stuffed in out of the wet wherever they would go. To make matters worse, the storm continued without signs of



letting up, and they had to eat their first regular meal in a camp under a leaky awning. For a time Bob found it rather depressing; but the hot supper tasted good and he soon felt better. Finally the rain ceased and a huge camp-fire was started. In the dusk of the evening the boys sat round the blaze on boxes or camp-stools and dried their clothes as they discussed the events of the afternoon. It was a delightful ending to a busy day.

Bob was one of those who had not been able to get his tent pitched before the shower, and at Fred Ashleigh's invitation had brought all of his outfit into Fred's tent. Now Taps was sounded, clear and musical in the quiet glen, the night watch was posted, and a few minutes later Bob lay snuggled up in his sleeping bag watching the flickering camp-fire through the door of the tent. It had been a busy day. It seemed to Bob the busiest day that he could remember. But as he lay there watching the fire and thinking over his experiences he felt very glad that he had come. "Yes, Joe Miller," he said to himself, "it looks to me as if this Scout camp might turn out to be a little bit of the real thing."



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIRST DAY

RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA! Ta-ta-ta! The clear tones of Fred Ashleigh's bugle were ringing out over the Scout camp, rousing the sleeping boys, and echoing from the hills. Shouts and groans from the tents greeted the bugle-call as the sleepy boys began to turn out. Bob Hanson opened his eyes as Fred returned to the tent.

"Hello, Fred!" he called. "What do you mean by routing a fellow out of a sound sleep like that?"

Fred laughed. "Time to get up, old man. That's Reveille, you know, and means that everybody has to roll out of bed. Five minutes before setting up exercises; so you'd better hustle."

Bob pulled himself rather reluctantly out of his warm sleeping bag. He found he was a little stiff from his exercise of yesterday, but he hurried into his clothes and a few minutes later



joined the boys who were assembled in front of headquarters tent. After a brief wait they all started to go through the setting up exercises under the leadership of Mr. Bradley, familiarly known as Old Four Eyes, who was Mr. McGregor's assistant. Bob smiled as he looked the boys over. They were in all sorts of dress and undress, from B V D's to full uniform; their faces shone happily as they went through their exercises with a snap.

"Makes you feel good, doesn't it?" said Bob's neighbor, a tall, wiry boy with a long head and closely clipped hair.

"It would, I suppose, if my neck and arms weren't so sunburned," replied Bob.

"Gee! You did get well cooked," replied the long-headed boy whose name was Arthur Eggleston, but whom everybody called the Egg. He looked at Bob critically. "You ought to have greased yourself up with cold cream," he said.

"I did," answered Bob.

"Oh, well, then, the soreness will soon wear off. I had a great time last year the first week I was in camp. I got cooked up the first day just as you did, but I didn't know enough to put on any cold cream. For three or four days I was



so sore that I could hardly wear any clothes, and then I shed my skin like a snake. For a while I guess I must have looked the way a soft-shelled crab feels."

Bob laughed. "Or a boiled lobster," he suggested.

At this moment Fred Ashleigh hailed him. "Hello, Bob," he called, "it's the morning washup next. Get your tooth brush. I have towels and soap."

They all trailed down to a little mountain stream that tumbled through the woods a few rods behind the camp and washed their faces and hands in the cool water.

"Some bathroom, eh?" cried the Egg as he rubbed his clipped head vigorously with the towel.

"You bet it is!" replied Bob, looking up at the canopy of green leaves overhead and thinking how different it was from the white-tiled bathroom at home.

"I suppose Old Four Eyes will start up the morning swim in a day or two, won't he?" asked the Egg.

"Yes, to-morrow, probably," replied Fred.

"Morning swim!" exclaimed Bob. "In the lake?"



"Yep! A five minute dip before breakfast! Can't be beaten for an appetizer," said Fred.

Bob's eyes shone with delight. The cool water of the stream had washed the sleepy feeling away and he felt as fit as a fiddle.

"Come on," cried Fred, "we must beat it for breakfast. I'll have to sound Mess."

Leaving their towels and soap in their tents they tumbled down the trail to the cook shack a hundred yards or so below the headquarters tent. Breakfast was not quite ready, but a score or so of hungry boys were lined up before the shack with tin plates and cups in their hands waiting for the mess call. They were noisy but good-natured, and poked fun at each other as they waited. Presently Jeff, the colored cook, stuck his head out of the door and called, "Where de bugler? Tell 'im he kin call Mess." Fred sounded the familiar call, a window in the side of the shack was opened, and the boys began filing past, each receiving a helping of oatmeal, bread, butter, bacon, scrambled eggs and cocoa from Jeff and his two assistants. Passing on they sat down at the long tables in the mess tent or on logs, stumps or stones outside as



they chose. Bob took his seat between Fred Ashleigh and the Egg on a convenient log and attacked his breakfast with a hearty appetite. The food was good and well cooked, and Bob ate with a relish. "Anything would taste good here," he thought.

While they were in the midst of breakfast Mr. McGregor appeared, and for the first time Bob had a good look at him. He was a powerfully built man, a little above middle height, with close-cropped brown hair, clean-cut features, clear gray eyes, and a firm jaw. He seemed quiet but observant. Bob noticed that the boys all seemed to like him. They treated him with respect but without formality. Bob was surprised when Mr. McGregor nodded to him and called him by name.

"I don't see how he could remember my name," said Bob. "He never saw me before yesterday."

"Oh! That's one of Uncle's stunts," explained the Egg. "He knows the name of every boy in camp, and he never forgets."

"That's only one of his stunts, though," said Fred. "When you know him better you'll find him a wonder."



"Is there to be Assembly this morning?" asked the Egg.

"Yes," replied Fred; "Uncle told me to blow Assembly as soon as breakfast was over."

"What's Assembly?" asked Bob.

"Wait and see," said the Egg mysteriously. "Assembly in this camp is something rich and rare. It's Sunday-school, church, a circus and a picnic all rolled into one. Uncle is some talker, take it from me. If you've done something you ought not to have done he'll make you feel like the chief mourner at a funeral."

Fred smiled. "He certainly has a wonderful way of getting the best out of a fellow—nothing mushy about him, either."

A few minutes later Bob had a chance to see for himself what Mr. McGregor was like at Assembly. The boys all gathered under a wide-spreading yellow birch, and seated on a big stone, with his back to the tree, Mr. McGregor addressed them. He spoke briefly but to the point. First he had all the boys stand and repeat the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. Then he told them that he expected them to model their conduct on the Scout Law every day they were in camp. "If you do this," he said, "there won't



be any trouble. You are here to have a good time, but you can't have a good time if you think only of yourselves. You must remember the other fellow and not intrude on his rights. It is the mark of a gentleman, you know, to be considerate of others. You must remember, too, that there are certain camp duties to be performed every day, and that for the sake of everybody's comfort it is important that these duties be done promptly, regularly, and cheerfully. A grumbler makes himself and everybody around him uncomfortable. We don't want any grumblers. Do your duties without complaint; that's one of the first lessons for you to learn.

"Now before we begin to play we must get the camp completely settled. Those of you who didn't get your tents pitched yesterday must attend to that first. Next we must have a supply of fire-wood for the camp-fire to-night. I shall appoint some boys to attend to that. Of course, the boys who were at the camp last year know pretty well what our routine is, but some of you are newcomers; so it will take several days to get things organized and the camp routine established. I want to remind you all that it is one of our first principles that every boy in this camp



must do something each day to help pay his way. Every boy is expected to do some work for Jeff to earn a meal ticket. So between now and eleven-thirty every boy must report for work at the cook shack. You won't have to do anything very difficult, and it won't take much time. It's the principle that's important. Now don't forget. No boy who hasn't earned a meal ticket need expect any dinner."

Here the Egg grinned and winked at Bob.

"Now another point," continued Mr. McGregor. "One of the most important things is orderliness. You are expected to keep your tents neat and clean, your blankets carefully folded, and your belongings in your trunk or camp chest. Beginning to-morrow there will be inspection every morning by Mr. Bradley. Those who fail to maintain a reasonable degree of neatness in and about your tents will be penalized in one way or another. Other rules and regulations will be made from time to time as we get better settled and as the need for them arises. That is all this morning."

Bob was about to leave the Assembly when Mr. McGregor called his name. "Fred Ashleigh has spoken to me about you," he said, "and



I'm very glad indeed that you decided to come up to the camp. You'll find things very simple here, but I think that you will also find things interesting and, I hope, very helpful and inspiring. The Scout work is important, about the most important work for boys, I believe, that is being done anywhere to-day, and full of wonderful possibilities for the future manhood of our great country. The Boy Scout movement is not all play. It is a serious movement, carefully organized and planned to develop manhood, to help the growing boy develop himself physically, mentally and morally in order to grow up in a way to realize his highest possibilities as a man. I hope that you will become so interested in what you see here in the camp that you will want to become a Scout. In case you do, I can put you in charge of a boy who will tell you how to prepare for your examinations and help you to pass them."

Here Mr. McGregor smiled and held out his hand. Bob took it cordially. The simple earnestness of the man had impressed him. He began to understand why the others liked him.

"Thank you very much," he said. "I'd like to think it over and then let you know."



"Don't hurry, Bob," said Mr. McGregor. "Things of this sort can't be forced," and with a smile he turned away.

With the Egg's help Bob got his expensive tent pitched. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in the Scout camp and it naturally excited great admiration. Some of the boys, however, laughed good-naturedly at it and one big fellow whom the boys called Dimples christened it The Greenhouse.

"Anyone would know you were Irish," he remarked.

"But I'm not," declared Bob stoutly.

"Oh, don't be ashamed of it," said Dimples. "Green's a fine color, and if I were you I'd make a good job of it. Stick up an Irish flag on top of The Greenhouse and sit up and play 'The Wearing of the Green' on a jew's-harp every night after dinner."

Bob laughed. "I'll play if you'll dance," he said.

After The Greenhouse had been properly pitched and his belongings arranged, it was time to report to the cook to earn his meal ticket. Bob found a dozen boys about the cook shack doing various small tasks. Some were shelling peas,



others were peeling potatoes, and still others were bringing water from the spring. All performed their tasks cheerfully as a regular part of the routine. Jeff gave Bob a pan of potatoes to peel.

"Don' cut de peelin's too thick," he warned. "Some fellers des wastes half de pertaters."

Bob observed Jeff's warning and peeled his potatoes carefully. When he had finished a panful he was free until dinner-time.

So far he had not had a minute to try his canoe. He had left it yesterday afternoon lying bottom up under some trees by the shore. Now he felt was the time to try it. So he hurried along the path toward the lake. As he stepped up to take hold of one end of the canoe he noticed something move in the long grass. Thinking it was probably only a frog, he bent over to lift the canoe and push it into the water. Again the grass moved and then all at once he saw what it was. A small snake lay loosely coiled within a foot of him. Bob's heart gave a great leap. For an instant he seemed paralyzed. Then came a reaction, and with a frightened yell he started to jump back. But the snake, probably quite as frightened as Bob, was quicker. In an instant he had struck. Bob was conscious of a sharp,



stinging sensation in his right hand, and as he leaped back he saw two tiny bright red spots near his wrist. Thoroughly frightened, he yelled at the top of his lungs: "Quick, quick! I'm bitten!"

It seemed to Bob an interminable time before anyone came. He had not the slightest idea what to do to help himself. There did indeed flash through his mind stories that he had heard of people who had been bitten by snakes, and he had a vague idea that the poison ought to be sucked from the wound. In reality it was not more than a minute before he was surrounded by a dozen boys all asking him what the matter was. Bob held out his hand.

"I've been bitten by a snake," he gasped. "I stooped to take hold of my canoe when it bit me."

He had hardly got the words out of his mouth before he was forced to the ground by a big red-haired boy who snatched a handkerchief from someone and proceeded to make a tourniquet about Bob's forearm just above the wrist. Then to Bob's dismay he whipped out a big pocket knife, and before Bob could protest he opened the wound made by the snake's fangs and began to suck it. The other boys stood about breathlessly looking on.



By this time Mr. Bradley had come up. As soon as he saw what the matter was he sent a boy off on the run to tell Mr. McGregor.

"Do you know what kind of a snake it was?" he asked.

"No," answered Bob rather faintly.

"What did he look like?"

"It all happened so quickly I hardly had time to see," replied Bob.

At this point Mr. McGregor came running up with a bottle of strong ammonia. He bathed the wound freely with it, using a piece of absorbent cotton. Bob cried out with pain as the ammonia touched him.

"Be a soldier, youngster," said Mr. McGregor. "This is to keep the poison from spreading. Now," he said, when he had bathed the wound sufficiently, "we must get you up to your tent. Can you walk? If not we'll make an emergency stretcher for you."

Bob gritted his teeth. "Of course I can walk," he declared stoutly.

Mr. McGregor looked at him keenly. Bob was rather pale.

"That's the right spirit," he said, "but it won't hurt you to have a little ride." In reality the



Commissioner was glad of an excuse to call on the boys for some real first-aid work.

At a word from him, they soon improvised an emergency stretcher from a couple of poles with some coats buttoned over them. Placing Bob carefully on it two boys carried him up to his tent and laid him on his cot.

An hour later a doctor in a village near by was summoned by telephone. When he arrived at the camp he found that all he had to do was to approve of everything that had been done for Bob.

“There’s nothing I can do for you, young man, that hasn’t been done,” he said, smiling and nodding at Mr. McGregor. “These Scouts are spoiling my business,” he continued; “they are such a healthy lot that they are never sick, and when one of them gets hurt his mates know just what to do for him. The next generation won’t need any doctors.”

After leaving some medicine to be used in case of unfavorable developments and giving a few directions the doctor went away.

The next morning Mrs. Hanson arrived at the camp in her motor car. She was rather frightened in spite of Mr. McGregor’s reassur-



ing message over the telephone, and wanted to take Bob right home. But Bob would not listen to such a suggestion.

“I’m all right,” he declared. “I haven’t had any fever at all since I was bitten. Mr. McGregor says that if I was going to have any trouble the signs would have appeared before now. He says that Reddy McTurk must have sucked out all the poison yesterday.”

So Mrs. Hanson yielded. To Reddy McTurk she was profuse in her praise. “My dear boy,” she said, “if there is anything in the world that I can do for you, let me know and I will gladly do it.”

But Reddy only blushed and looked very much embarrassed. “I don’t want any reward, Mrs. Hanson,” he said. “Saving Bob from the snake will count as my good turn, you see.”

Mrs. Hanson looked puzzled, and glanced at Mr. McGregor.

“A Scout is supposed to do somebody a good turn every day, and he is not expected to accept a reward for his services,” explained the Commissioner.

Mrs. Hanson’s eyes filled with tears. “Well, if that is the spirit of the Scouts I shall be

a proud mother on the day that my boy joins them," she said.

Mr. McGregor looked very serious and he cleared his throat before he spoke. Then he said quietly, "Mrs. Hanson, the Scout movement is doing more for the boys of America than all other agencies put together."

"I am beginning to believe you," she said.



## CHAPTER V

### ON THE WAY TO BE A TENDERFOOT

For several days the excitement caused by Bob's adventure with the snake was the chief topic of conversation. Groups of boys organized searching parties, and the edge of the lake where the accident had occurred was thoroughly examined. The snake had disappeared, however, and was never seen again by any of the boys.

"He didn't like the taste of you, Bob," said Reddy McTurk. "So he left the neighborhood for good."

"It's lucky for him," said the Egg. "If he'd been caught he would have been cut up into mincemeat. Everybody in camp would have wanted a piece of his skin for a souvenir, and there wouldn't have been a morsel for each fellow as big as a postage stamp."

"Jeff says he doesn't believe there was any snake," said Fred. "He was talking to me about it last night. 'Ah tell you, suh'"—here Fred



imitated the cook's voice—" 'Ah don' believe fer a minute dere was a snake. Des one er dem ghos' snakes what Si Turtelotte hez killed fer de museums. He des skeered de boy outen spite. Yassir. Some snakes is des mean 'nough fer 'at.' "

Bob laughed. " He was a pretty lively ghost," he said. " He had fangs, all right."

" You ought to know, Bob," agreed Fred.

The boys had assembled at their favorite rendezvous, an enormous boulder on the hillside some distance above the camp-ground. By climbing part way up a small oak tree they could swing themselves over onto a wide, moss-covered shelf on the rock and from there scramble up to the top. The boulder was half as large as a small house, and the top commanded a magnificent view. The ground fell off so abruptly in front that the outlook was unobstructed by trees, while behind, a group of tall oaks overshadowed the rock and afforded shade during the morning. Bob, Fred, Reddy McTurk and the Egg had found one another very congenial and had formed themselves into a " gang." They spent a good deal of time together, and when they wished to be by themselves they would frequently climb up



to the Crow's Nest, as they called the big boulder. Sprawled out on the springy moss that covered the rock they could read and write or talk to their hearts' content.

Bob had completely recovered from the shock of his encounter and had settled down into the life of the camp which was well organized and moved like clockwork. There was a regular routine of work and play, skillfully interspersed under the guidance of Mr. McGregor and planned in such a way as to develop in the boys a sense of responsibility, at the same time affording plenty of opportunity for relaxation and fun.

The camp in one respect resembled a small city. The boys had elected a mayor, who acted under the general guidance of Mr. McGregor; there was also a chief of police whose purpose was to maintain order. The contest for mayor had been very keen but Fred Ashleigh had been elected by a safe majority. Tommy Fielder, the big first baseman of the Cedarville High School team, had been elected chief of police. Under these clear-headed and popular boys the activities of the camp were well organized.

Bob had been doing some hard thinking since Mr. McGregor spoke to him on the opening day.



It was now the end of the first week and he was greatly impressed by the spirit of the boys and the order and discipline of the camp. The talks of the Commissioner at Assembly, the ideals he set before the boys, and the earnestness with which they tried to live up to these ideals stirred him strongly. He could not help comparing the atmosphere at the Scout camp with what he had seen the previous summer at a camp in the Catskills where he had spent a couple of days visiting a friend. In the Catskills the boys slept between sheets, and the care of the tents, the table service, and all other work was done by colored servants. The boys themselves did no work, but were expected only to spend their time in amusement. As a result time often hung heavily on their hands and they got into mischief. Bob remembered some of the wild pranks they had played. They saw nothing wrong in breaking into the storeroom at night and stealing fruit and jam; and nobody was ever found out or punished for it. Once the headquarters tent had been set on fire and most of its contents were burned. Bob had taken no part in any of these pranks; in fact, he was rather amazed at them. Now as he sat on the rock he thought of them with disgust.



How different that spirit was from the spirit at the Scout camp, where every fellow felt a sense of responsibility, and lived up to it, where every boy was placed on his honor and took pride in keeping his honor clean!

Suddenly he jumped to his feet and without a word started to scramble down the side of the rock.

"Where you going, Bob?" inquired Reddy in surprise.

"You'll see," replied Bob with a smile. "I'll be back in ten minutes."

"I wonder where he's going?" asked Fred of the Egg, but for once the Egg had no suggestion to offer.

Bob hurried to the headquarters tent, where he found Mr. McGregor writing a letter. At the Commissioner's invitation he sat down on a bench. "I'm glad to see you, Bob," said Mr. McGregor. "What can I do for you?"

"I'd like to become a Scout," replied Bob directly.

"Well, I'm very glad to hear that! You have been in camp long enough to get acquainted with the work. I'm pleased to know that you like it." The Commissioner picked up a note-book and



studied it a few moments. "I shall put you under Fred Ashleigh's care," he continued. "He will explain the requirements and help you prepare for them. The test for admission is not hard and I feel sure you will have little trouble."

"I don't intend to fail," declared Bob.

"Good for you. That's the proper spirit," and Mr. McGregor placed his hand on Bob's shoulder in a friendly manner.

When Bob returned to the base of the rock his three friends were waiting for him.

"Tell us about it," cried the Egg. "Where did you go so suddenly? Must have been something important."

Bob told the boys his decision as soon as he reached the top.

"Say, that's great!" exclaimed Fred. "I knew you'd want to join. You won't make any mistake either, and you'll be surprised to find the more you learn about scouting the more interesting it will become. We want you with us, Bob."

Reddy McTurk and the Egg were as pleased as Fred about it. All three boys took Bob in hand that afternoon. Enthusiastically they returned to the Crow's Nest to give him his first lesson in knot tying. Bob found that he had



much to learn. He knew the difference between a square knot and a granny, but what a clove hitch and a bowline were he had no idea. He made rapid progress, however, and by dinner-time he could tie all nine of the knots called for in the Tenderfoot's requirements. Better still, after dinner when Fred called on him to see if he remembered them, he was able to tie every knot correctly without a single false move.

"You'll do for the knot tying," said Fred. "Now for the salute," and he showed Bob how to hold up his hand to his hat with the thumb and the little finger crossed in front of the other three fingers. A little practice fixed the salute in his mind. Then came the hand grip. That, too, was soon mastered, and Bob was able to give the grip to the rest of the Gang and also salute them in the most approved style.

"Now we come to the high-brow stuff," said the Egg. "This knot-tying and saluting and hand-shaking are easy enough, but learning the Scout Oath and the Scout Law takes more brains."

"That's why the Egg can't say the Scout Law yet without making mistakes," said Fred, laughing.



"Don't you believe him, Bob," said the Egg. "I can say it backward in my sleep."

"And while you're awake, too," said Fred. "That's just the trouble."

"Aren't they a mean lot of fellows?" asked the Egg, putting on an injured look. "They never will give me credit for what I know. It's nothing but envy, though."

Before it was time for the afternoon swim Bob could repeat the Scout Oath: "On my honor I will do my best—to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

The Scout Law was more difficult, and Bob spent several hours memorizing it. Before he went to bed that night, however, he repeated it to Fred without a mistake.

"You're doing well," said Fred. "You'll soon be ready for your initiation. You'll get an invitation to ride the goat in a few days."

"It's some ride, too, believe me," said the Egg. "A bucking bronco isn't in it with the Scout goat."

Fred smiled reassuringly at Bob. "Don't let



them scare you, Bob," he said. "If the Egg pulled through I guess you can."

"Abusin' me as usual," said the Egg, making a face at Fred. "It's lucky for you that I'm so sweet tempered."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE INITIATION

IN a few days Bob had met all the requirements of a Tenderfoot to Fred's satisfaction. He could tie the nine knots, beginning with a square knot and ending with a timber hitch and two half hitches, one after another, rapidly and without the slightest mistake. He could tell the history of the Flag and the customary forms of respect toward it. He could repeat the Scout Oath and the Scout Law, describe the significance of the badge and give the Scout Salute and the Scout Grip. He was ready for his initiation.

Mr. McGregor believed in making the Tenderfoot initiation impressive; accordingly he had worked out an interesting and dignified form of ceremony. One evening after supper the whole camp assembled in the little square in front of the headquarters tent. Chairs had been placed for Mr. McGregor and Mr. Bradley, but the boys sat wherever they could find room, some on



camp-chairs, some on empty boxes, and some on the ground. They formed a large circle about an unlighted camp-fire, the wood for which had been cut and brought in by Bob himself. There was no noisy talking and laughter that were common when the boys assembled about the usual evening camp-fire. To-night everybody seemed impressed by the seriousness of the occasion. They took their seats quietly and waited patiently for Mr. McGregor to appear.

Dusk was setting in when the Commissioner and his assistant took their seats. The beautiful ceremony of presenting the colors came first. Two boys walked forward, one bearing the Stars and Stripes, the other the Scout flag. All the Scouts stood at attention as the bugle played "To the Colors." The color-bearers then retired, and the Scouts seated themselves again. For a minute or two there was a pause; then Bob appeared accompanied by Fred. At a sign from Mr. McGregor Bob knelt before the fire. Holding a piece of flint in his left hand, he struck it sharply with a bit of steel that he held in his right. The sparks flew out in showers against the handful of shredded cedar bark that lay on the ground. Bob snatched it up, and holding it



carefully in both hands, blew upon it steadily. The tinder glowed and smoked. Then suddenly it burst into flame and he thrust it hastily under one edge of the camp-fire. The flames began to lick the wood, and the smoke rose in increasing volumes. In a few moments, with a loud crackling, the whole camp-fire was ablaze, and the glare lit up the faces of the boys and gilded the leaves of the trees behind them. Everyone sat in silence gazing into the fire. The flames leaped higher and higher, sending up showers of sparks that floated out in the air like fireflies.

Presently Mr. McGregor stood up, and at a sign from him Bob stepped forward. The quiet of the dusk was broken only by the crackling of the camp-fire. Then Mr. McGregor's voice rose firm and clear.

"Robert Hanson, you have completed the requirements for admission as a Tenderfoot to the Boy Scouts to the satisfaction of your sponsor, and have presented yourself for initiation. Are you still resolved to take the Scout Oath? If not, this is your last opportunity to draw back."

"I am ready to take the oath," said Bob firmly.

"Do you understand what this oath means?"



“ I do.”

“ Raise your right hand and repeat the oath with me.”

Raising his right hand, Bob repeated the oath with Mr. McGregor.

“ On my honor I will do my best—to do my duty to God and my country, and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”

“ What are the twelve points of the Scout Law? ”

“ A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.”

“ We will now wait while you put on your uniform.”

Bob left the circle followed by Fred. He already wore as much of the Scout uniform as he could get on under his every-day clothes. With Fred's assistance it was a matter of only two or three minutes before he was able to get into full Scout uniform and reappear before Mr. McGregor.

The Commissioner resumed the ceremony. “ You have now met the requirements for admis-



sion into the Boy Scouts and have taken the Scout Oath. You have become a member of a great brotherhood. It is for you to conduct yourself in a way to make yourself a worthy member and to advance its usefulness in the world. This is a great responsibility, and I cannot urge upon you too strongly the importance of living up to it. I shall now proceed to invest you with the insignia of the brotherhood."

Holding out to Bob a Scout staff, Mr. McGregor continued:

"I give you this staff to support your steps on your future journeys. It is a symbol of the support that your membership in the Scout order will be to you in your future life. It should guide and sustain you in times of trial, should assist you to keep your feet when weary and exhausted, and should help you to lift yourself up out of the dust and mire." Mr. McGregor then handed Bob a canteen, saying, "I give you this canteen filled with water, the symbol of a clean life. It has sprung sweet and pure from the depths of the earth. As your thirst is quenched by a draught of this water so let your spirit be refreshed by all pure influences."

Next he placed in Bob's hands a knapsack.



“This knapsack is an emblem of the burden of responsibility which you are assuming as a Scout. It contains a first-aid package, as a symbol of your duty to help a fellow sufferer. It contains also a piece of bread to symbolize the food that you will carry to sustain your strength and to satisfy your hunger upon your journeys. Next I give you this axe as a symbol of service. Its blade is keen. See that it remains so. Do not let it become rusty through neglect or nicked through misuse. Keep it ever bright and shining, and ever keen and sharp, ready for service. About your waist I place this belt. It is the symbol of chivalry. It stands for readiness in emergency and the will to do helpful service. In days of old the young knight was girded with a belt as he stood at the threshold of his career of service. So now I gird you for the service of the Scout brotherhood.”

Bob stood straight and silent, knowing that all eyes were studying him closely.

“And now I place upon your breast the badge which marks you before the eyes of the world as a member of the Scout organization,” continued the Commissioner. “It is a sign of identification with the interest of a great order and its



principles. Take pride in its possession. Look upon it as a mark of honor. Live worthily that you may deserve it. And finally I give you the grip, the hand-clasp of the brotherhood. It stands for good fellowship, friendship, fidelity, sincerity, and helpfulness."

Here Mr. McGregor paused for a few seconds; the stillness was unbroken except for the crackling of the camp-fire. Bob wondered if the ceremony was ended.

"I shall send you on a little journey," said Mr. McGregor. "Make the rounds of the camp circle and give the hand-clasp to every Scout present. When you have done that come back to me. Let this symbolize your journey through life and the assistance that you will give to, and receive from, your fellow travellers on this great journey."

Bob passed slowly round the camp-fire, shaking hands with every boy. He could see by the expression on their faces that the words of the Commissioner had impressed them as much as they had impressed him. He made the round without speaking and returned to his place.

Mr. McGregor then continued: "I welcome you to the membership in the Scouts. Keep



your oath sacred, guide your life by the Scout Law and bear ever in mind the Scout motto, Be Prepared."

At a sign from Mr. McGregor the standard-bearers again came forward. They placed themselves, one on each side of Bob, facing Mr. McGregor. The Commissioner raised his hand in salute. Everyone present did likewise. Then Retreat rang out in the still air from Fred Ashleigh's bugle. When the last echoes had died away, the color-bearers filed out again in silence. The initiation was over. Bob was a full-fledged Scout.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE RAID

THE day after his initiation Bob wrote to his mother, giving her a lengthy description of the ceremony. He received in return a long letter of congratulation and a promise of a substantial reminder of her love and good wishes. "I shall send you a basket of good things to eat," she said. The Gang were greatly excited at this news, and the next day when the "goodies" had arrived they skipped dinner at the mess tent and climbed up to the Crow's Nest with the big basket from Mrs. Hanson.

Besides the Gang there were Tommy Fielder, Chief of Police, Ralph Maxon, an Eagle Scout, and a great friend of Fred Ashleigh's, "Dimples," and two or three other boys.

"There'll be plenty of food," Bob confided to Fred, "and if we don't make way with the stuff right off it will spoil; so we may as well invite as big a crowd as the Crow's Nest will hold."

There was indeed plenty of food. The big



basket had all sorts of good things tucked inside. There was a fat, roasted chicken plumped out with stuffing, a delicious roasted ham, cold tongue, sardines, olives, and pickles, several kinds of pie and lots of fruit. The boys found the change from the camp fare very welcome and ate heartily.

"Gee, Bob, I hope you'll have another initiation soon," said the Egg, picking his second drumstick. The Egg had a weakness for drumsticks and had secured the second and only one left by trading for it a fat piece of white meat with Tommy Fielder.

"I don't see how I can manage that," replied Bob, his mouth full of stuffing. "Now that I'm a Tenderfoot, I feel like sitting back and enjoying myself a little."

"You have had a rather strenuous time since you've been at camp," said Fred. "With the snake and your training for your Tenderfoot exams you have been kept pretty busy."

"I wish that fellow Riggs would open up a little," said Reddy McTurk. "He gets a basket of grub from home about twice a week, but he never asks anybody to help him eat it. Wonder how he can get away with it all himself?"



"He's too mean to suit me," said the Egg. "He got a basket of fruit to-day, and I saw him beat it off into the woods all alone to eat it by himself."

"He has no Scout spirit," declared Reddy.

"He isn't a Scout," said Fred. "His folks sent him up here hoping he would catch the spirit."

"We ought to help him catch it," said Bob.

"He ought to be raided," said the Egg.

"Here, here!" exclaimed Tommy Fielder. "If you're going to do any raiding I don't want to know anything about it."

"Oh, put some cotton in your ears, old Scout," advised the Egg. "You can't hear us if we talk low."

The idea of raiding the Riggs boy met with general approval. Everyone agreed that he was mean. He had received several boxes of food and fruit since he had been at the camp, and everybody knew that he had not shared them with anyone else.

"He sure needs a lesson," said Reddy thoughtfully.

"What time had we better give it to him?" asked the Egg.



“Why not do it during my watch to-night?” asked Alec Thompson, one of the outsiders who had been invited to the spread. “I’m on from two to three with young Freelands. I’ll wake you all up and we’ll go to it.”

This suggestion met with instant favor, and plans were made immediately for the raid. Tommy Fielder left the Crow’s Nest before they had proceeded very far. As Chief of Police he did not care to know too much about the affair. The other boys, however, entered into the scheme with enthusiasm. The Riggs boy was certainly mean, and a lesson would do him good. After talking the matter over and arranging the details of the raid the party broke up.

The evening passed in the usual manner. As dusk came on, the camp-fire was started and the boys gathered about it talking and telling stories. Mr. Bradley described a camping trip that he had taken in Labrador a year or two before, and Mr. McGregor added an account of some mountain climbing that he had done in British Columbia. At half-past nine Taps was blown, as usual, the night watch was posted, and silence crept over the camp.

A little after two o’clock when everyone but



the night watch was supposed to be sound asleep, the raiders stole quietly from their tents and met in the moonlight at a point some distance from the camp. Here they proceeded to black their faces with charcoal. Their own mothers could not have recognized them when they were fully disguised.

"A minstrel troupe wouldn't be in it with us," said Reddy McTurk, grinning broadly in order to show his teeth.

"Riggsie will think he has the nightmare when he wakes up and sees us," whispered the Egg with delight.

"It will serve him right for eating so much. He deserves to have stomach ache," said Reddy.

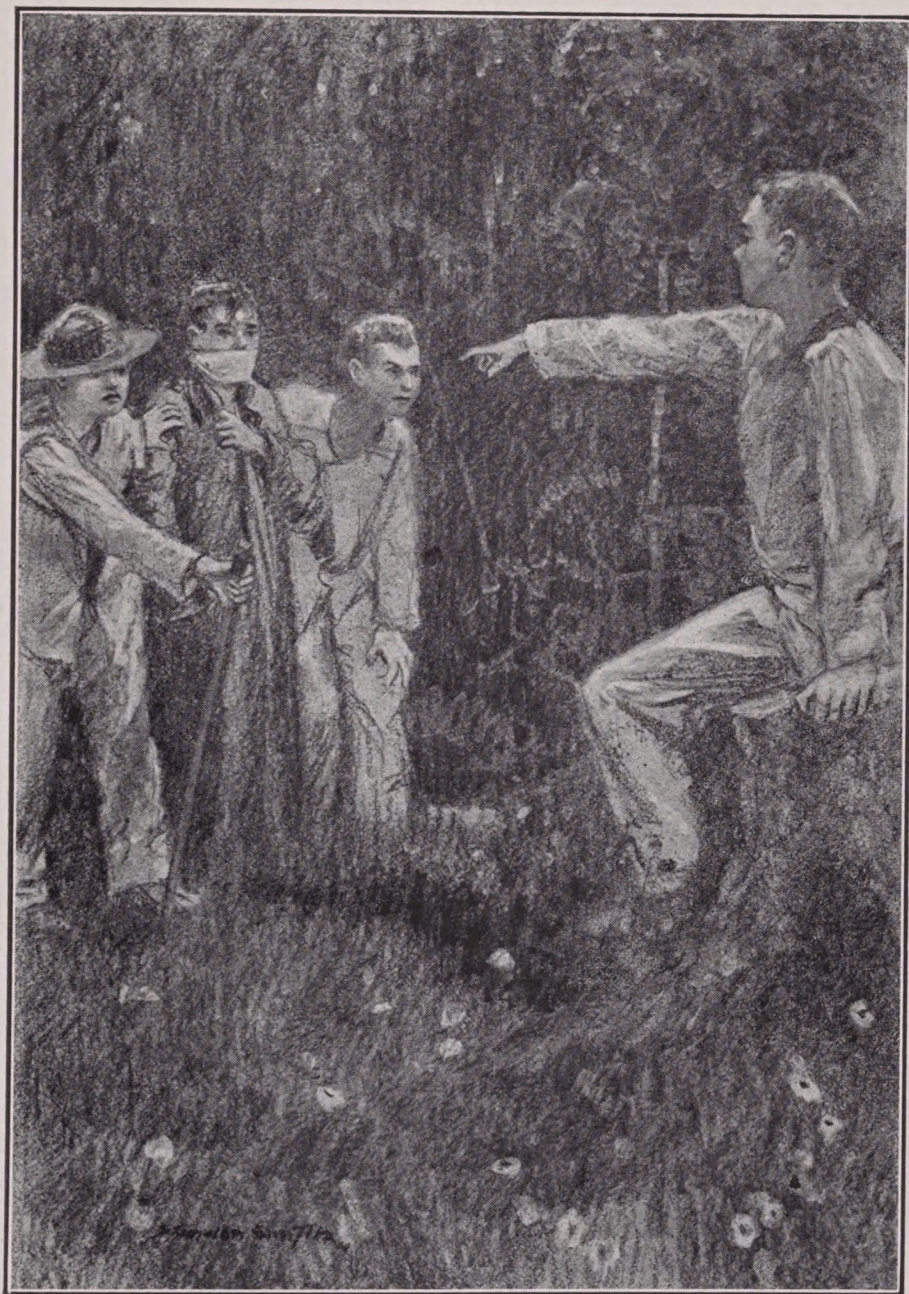
"Well now," asked Fred, "are you all sure that you remember just what to do?"

"Sure," was the reply in low chorus.

"All right, then, come on! Don't make any unnecessary noise."

They filed stealthily down to the camp. Fortunately for their purpose the Riggs boy's tent was on the outer edge of the camp next to the woods. They found it without difficulty. The occupant was sound asleep. A brief search re-





“BRING THE PRISONER BEFORE ME.”







vealed the fruit they were looking for, and two of the boys took this in charge.

The other boys pulled young Riggs out of bed and before he could make a sound stuffed a towel into his mouth. Then quickly tying his arms behind his back they led him quietly from the tent. The whole thing was done in a few minutes with very little noise and no struggle.

A few minutes later they reached their rendezvous in the woods. Fred Ashleigh climbed up on a big stump that stood in the middle of the little clearing where they were assembled and waved his arms with simulated fierceness.

"Bring the prisoner before me," he commanded in an unnatural voice.

The scared boy with a guard on each side of him was dragged forward. He wore a bathrobe over a suit of pajamas, and his captors had been thoughtful enough to place a pair of slippers on his feet.

"You are accused of being a hog," said Fred, "and I am informed that witnesses are present to support the accusation. We will listen to the testimony. Who is the first witness?"

At this, Reddy McTurk stepped forward and made a low bow.



"Your High Mightiness," he said, "I can testify truthfully that the prisoner before you has more than once received by the bus boxes and baskets containing eatables of various sorts, and that he has privately consumed said eatables without offering to share them with his worthy companions at the camp. Such conduct indicates a most terrible selfishness and is surely contrary to the spirit of the camp. I recommend that he be given some punishment suitable to the gravity of his offense."

Here Reddy stepped back.

"Gosh! Where did Reddy get all those big words?" whispered Ralph Maxon to Bob.

"Silence there!" said Fred sternly. "Are there other witnesses?"

The Egg stepped forward. "I can testify that on one occasion at least the accused has received a watermelon and that he tried to eat it in the privacy of his tent. I understand that some of this watermelon spoiled before the prisoner was able to eat it himself. Think of it, gentlemen—spoiled! It is an outrage that a watermelon should have gone to waste in a camp of hungry boys. If I had been called in to the prisoner's assistance, I am sure that I



could have prevented that watermelon from spoiling."

"So could I! So could I!" shouted several voices.

"Silence!" commanded Fred.

One or two other boys added their testimony to that of Reddy and the Egg. The judge shook his head. "This looks bad," he said. "Remove the gag from the prisoner's mouth."

When the towel had been removed he again addressed the prisoner. "What have you to say in your defense?" he asked.

There was no reply, and Fred repeated the question several times. Still the Riggs boy remained silent.

"If you have no defense to make," declared Fred, after vainly trying to extract an answer, "I shall have to assume that you are guilty. I therefore decree that as punishment you shall be condemned to stand by while your fruit is being devoured by those with whom you have selfishly refused to share it. Gag him again," he added.

The prisoner was gagged and made to sit on the ground. Then the boys divided the fruit and ate it all with great relish. There was half a



watermelon, a dozen oranges, and a number of bananas and apples. It was a great feast. The night was warm and the full moon made it almost as light as day. The boys sat grouped about their prisoner and ate the fruit in high spirits.

"Well," said Fred at last, "we've eaten everything, and it is getting late. Suppose we beat it for camp."

"We must decorate the prisoner first," said Reddy.

"Oh, sure! I had forgotten that," said Fred.

The prisoner was now jerked upon his feet and the boys proceeded to decorate him with the remains of the feast. Grinning gleefully Fred dug the pulp from the end of the watermelon and fashioned a cap for the unlucky boy. Fastened under the chin with a shoestring and tilted jauntily on one side, it made the prisoner look like an idiot. At sight of him the boys howled with suppressed laughter, and the Egg rolled on the ground holding his sides.

"Isn't that the swell cap, though?" he said. "Looks like one of those trench helmets, doesn't it?" And he rolled over and over on the ground in a fit of laughter.

"Shut up!" said Fred. "You're making too



much noise. They'll hear you way down at the camp."

"He ought to have some kind of necklace," said Reddy McTurk; "something like what the Indian chiefs wear, you know, eagles' feet and junk like that."

"Sure thing!" chorused the crowd; and in the course of a few minutes a wonderful necklace of apple cores and orange peelings had been strung on another shoestring and tied round the victim's neck. Then followed bracelets and a belt made in the same way. When this was done the boys stood off to admire their handiwork. Again they shouted with laughter.

Bob felt a pang of pity as he looked at the prisoner. Then remembering how selfish and disagreeable the fellow had been, and how he had failed to grasp the spirit of the camp, he realized that the boy was probably getting just the sort of medicine he needed.

"Well now," said Fred, "I guess we've done everything we can do to make him look pretty."

"Hold on!" called Ralph Maxon. "I'm making something for him. He needs a badge, you see," and he came forward with a strip of water-



melon rind on which he had carved with his knife the word, Pig.

"There!" he said, after he had adjusted it so that it hung across the prisoner's breast. "That gives the final touch."

"Now, fellows," said Fred, "we must be careful. We want to put this business through right. Don't forget instructions. We don't want anyone to see this fellow till morning. Therefore we must be quiet. Forward march!"

Filing noiselessly back through the woods the boys reached Riggs' tent. Placing his camp chest in front of it, they seated him upon it with his back to the pole and fastened him there securely.

"There!" said Fred. "I guess he'll be all right till somebody discovers him. It's beginning to get light now."

The dawn was indeed breaking. The eastern sky was showing red through the trees, and the birds were beginning to sing. After a last look and a silent laugh at their victim, the boys stole back to their tents. The raid was over.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INVESTIGATION

BOB and Fred slept later than usual next morning. In fact, when the time for Reveille came Fred was deep in slumber. Many of the boys were awake, however, and the sound of low voices issued from several tents. Bob was roused by Mr. Bradley's voice. The Scoutmaster was standing at the open door of Fred's tent.

"Hello!" he called. "Where's our bugler this morning? It's twenty minutes to seven."

Fred had to be shaken before he was fully awake. Then he jumped up and, running out in his pajamas, blew Reveille. The usual chorus of yawns and grunts and calls came from the tents. Then suddenly a shout louder than all the others caught Bob's ears.

"Well, what do you know? Look who's here!"

"Hey, fellows! Come quick!"

"What's up?"

"Gee whizz! Did you ever?"

There was a general hubbub, then a roar of laughter. Fred sauntered up to the door of Bob's tent, bugle in hand. "They've just discovered Riggs," he whispered.

At that moment Reddy McTurk appeared. "Let's go over and see how he looks by daylight," he said.

Strolling over to Riggs' tent they found half the camp assembled in front of it. Peel after peel of laughter rose as the boys examined the luckless Riggs.

"Hey, Riggsie, where were you last night?"

"Out riding a nightmare, I'll bet!"

"Must have been a bucking bronco!"

"More likely he was out on a trench raid! Look at his helmet!"

"Gosh! How the Germans did him up!"

"Gee! Look at the necklace!"

"Hey! See the badge!"

"Say, Riggsie, what does P I G spell?"

In the midst of the excitement Bob heard Mr. McGregor's voice. "What's up, boys?"

Instantly there was a hush and the boys looked at each other wondering what the Commissioner would say. Mr. McGregor pushed his way



through the crowd until he reached Riggs. "Well, you are pretty well trussed up," he said, as he proceeded to release the prisoner. It was the work of only a minute or two to remove the gag and untie the boy.

"That's all, boys," said Mr. McGregor, "there's nothing more to see. Mr. Bradley is waiting to put you through your setting up exercises, I know."

The boys dispersed, laughing and talking, and were soon going through their morning exercises.

Needless to say, Riggs was in a rage. He wasn't the least bit hurt, except as to his feelings. The night had been warm, and he had not been too uncomfortable to doze a little. But he felt that he had been mistreated and complained loudly to Mr. McGregor, demanding that his assailants be found and punished.

Mr. McGregor listened calmly to his angry words, and when he had become somewhat quieter said, "Well, Riggs, the proper thing for you to do is to complain to the Chief of Police. Give him the facts in the case and any evidence that you think will help to run down the guilty boys. He will investigate the matter and hold a public hearing, if necessary."



"But aren't you the boss of this camp?" demanded Riggs impatiently.

"Yes," replied Mr. McGregor, "but I am trying to teach you boys to govern yourselves. That's why you have a Mayor and a Chief of Police. I leave it to the officers that you, yourselves, have elected to dispose of the camp business as far as possible. I shall not interfere unless I find it necessary to do so."

"Well, I'm going to have justice," declared Riggs.

"Yes, of course, you are going to have justice," said Mr. McGregor. "You needn't worry about that. Perhaps you have already had it," he added with a smile.

Riggs strode away fuming, but after he had washed his face and hands in the cool, refreshing water of the brook, his rage abated somewhat. A good breakfast of bacon and eggs made him feel still better. His rage was prevented from dying out entirely, however, by the grins with which the other boys greeted him whenever he appeared. Nor did they stop at grins.

"What does P I G spell?" one boy would ask another.

"Riggs," would be the prompt reply, and then



everybody within hearing would shout with laughter.

Riggs, of course, could not see the humor of it at all. It was an outrage! He would have justice! So he clung to his determination to run down the gang that had raided him and have them punished. Accordingly, after breakfast he hunted up Tommy Fielder, whom he found shaking out his blankets and tidying up his tent for morning inspection.

"I've got a complaint to make," he said with a scowl.

"Is that so?" questioned Tommy, with apparent surprise. "Suppose we sit down," he suggested hospitably, drawing up a couple of camp-chairs. "Now, what's on your chest?" he asked.

Tommy's innocent words reminded Riggs of the badge that he had worn on his bosom during the night. The word "Pig" rose vividly before his mind's eye. The tide of his rage rose also.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you've heard how I was raided last night."

Tommy nodded. "Yes," he said, "the whole camp has heard."

"I want you to catch the fellows that did it and give 'em what they deserve."



"Have you any idea who did it?"

Riggs hesitated. He had some suspicions, but no proofs. "Oh, of course, I'm not sure."

"But do you suspect anyone?"

"Well, yes, I think Reddy McTurk was one of 'em."

"What makes you think so?"

Riggs hesitated again. He didn't like to say that it was because Reddy had strolled by his tent one day and found him eating a watermelon all by himself and that in spite of Reddy's hints he had not invited him to eat any of it. So he said lamely:

"Well, Reddy McTurk is a rough kind of fellow, just the sort of chap to do a mean thing."

The Chief of Police eyed Riggs keenly. "I'm afraid you don't know Reddy very well," he said. "Haven't you anything more definite against him than that?"

Riggs was compelled to admit that he had not.

"Well," said Tommy, "I can't arrest him on mere suspicion."

Angry though he was, Riggs had to admit the justice of the Chief's remark.

"You ought to have some detectives," he said,



"so that you could put them on the job and let them run the business down."

"I have some detectives," said Tommy calmly.

Riggs started. He had spoken at random. He had never supposed that there were really any detectives in camp.

"Well, why not put them on the job?" he asked.

"I will," said the Chief. "If you will come to see me to-morrow morning about this time I will talk with you again and tell you what I have found out about the case."

Riggs felt relieved. He began to feel that after all there was a chance of getting even with his assailants.

"All right," he said, "I'll come around to-morrow morning."

After Riggs had gone Tommy Fielder looked up Spotty Dunn, his head detective, and told him about the interview with Riggs. Spotty grinned.

"What do you want me to do about it?" he asked. "I have a pretty good idea now who raided him, and if I try very hard I guess I could find out every fellow who was in on the job."

"Well," said the Chief thoughtfully, "I think what you had better do is this: find out how the



fellows feel about the raid, whether they take sides with Riggs or with the raiders. See if they think Riggs got what was coming to him. If he did, I'm not going to make trouble for anybody. My private opinion is that Riggs is a pretty mean sort and that he deserved every bit that he got."

"I think you're dead right," said Spotty, "and I feel the same way myself. If I find anything on the other side I'll let you know."

Next morning when Riggs appeared at Tommy Fielder's tent he was still feeling injured, but his anger had cooled a great deal.

"Well," he said, "did your detectives find out anything?"

"Yes, a lot," replied Tommy.

"Ah, that's good," said Riggs, slapping his knee. "Did they find out who the raiders were?"

"They know pretty well who they were."

"Ha! I hope you'll soak 'em."

"Well, I don't know that they ought to be soaked," replied Tommy quietly.

Riggs looked up quickly. "You don't? What do you mean by that?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Riggs," said the Chief



slowly. "This is the way I look at it. You've been at this camp now for more than three weeks, and every three or four days you've had a basket or a box of food of some kind sent up to you. But so far as I've been able to find out you haven't offered to share any of your stuff with a single fellow in camp. Now, under the circumstances, I'm not surprised that the fellows raided you. I think it served you right. If you had shown a more generous spirit, nobody would have thought of bothering you for a minute. Perhaps that sounds a little blunt to you, but I'm speaking right out just what I think. My advice to you is to say nothing more about this raid and to turn over a new leaf. When you get something good, don't be stingy about it; pass it round. You want to enjoy yourself at camp, don't you? You want to have the good-will of the rest of the fellows ——"

"Of course I do," interrupted Riggs. "I'd give anything to be as popular as Fred Ashleigh."

"Well, you've got to be generous if you want to be popular. You can't get anything that's worth while without giving something in return. Just think that over."



For a moment nothing more was said. The Chief of Police waited for his caller to leave. But Riggs sat silent on his camp-stool, apparently lost in thought. Then suddenly, to the Chief's surprise, the boy rose and held out his hand.

"Say," he said, "let's shake. I guess you're right about this business. You see, I've always lived with three old maid aunts and never have been much with other boys. I'm not used to 'em, I guess. And I sure don't want to be called mean by anybody."

Tommy took the hand that Riggs held out to him, almost too surprised to speak. "Well," he managed to say at length, "we'd all better forget about it, I guess. You've had your lesson and it has done you good. That was what the raid was for."

"I nearly had heart failure at Riggsie's sudden turn-about," he confided later, as he was telling the story to the Gang. They, too, were quite as astonished as Tommy.

"Perhaps he'll turn out to be a decent fellow, after all," said Bob.

"The camp will make a man of him if anything can," said Fred.



“ Well, I’m glad we raided him before he got converted,” said Reddy McTurk.

“ Amen!” exclaimed the Egg.



## CHAPTER IX

### AN ADVENTURE WITH A PORKY

BOB had now been at the Scout camp nearly three weeks and had been hardly more than a mile away from the lake. He had not felt confined or limited in any way, however, because there was so much to do at the camp. He found the companionship of the boys, especially that of the Gang, so delightful that he never felt the need of leaving the camp for any length of time. A considerable part of each day was filled with duties that were not irksome, and there were many things to keep him amused. There were the regular morning and afternoon swims that he always looked forward to with pleasure; there was generally a paddle on the lake, and perhaps a race with one of the other boys; and there was always sure to be a game or a walk to one of the many "lookouts" on the neighboring hills. He was never bored.

One night after supper, as Bob was sitting before the camp-fire waiting for the regular even-



ing exercises to begin, Mr. McGregor asked him if he cared for trout fishing.

"Yes, indeed," said Bob; "I've done a good deal of it in the Adirondacks."

"Well, then, why don't you make up a little party and go over to Bog Brook fishing some day?"

"I should certainly like to!" exclaimed Bob.

Mr. McGregor got out a map and showed him the location of the brook. From the head of the lake there was an old wood road that led to within a mile or so of the head-waters. From that point an easy walk through the woods would bring them out into a meadow through which the brook ran. It would make a fine outing. They could take lunch with them and stay all day.

"The trout are small," he said, "and at this time of the year you probably won't find many, but you ought to catch a fair-sized string, and you'll have lots of fun whether you catch many fish or not. Another thing, the brook is small and pretty well overgrown with bushes; so I wouldn't advise you to try and fish with flies. Better dig some worms down behind the cook shack. You'll catch more fish with them and run less risk of breaking your rod."



Bob's interest grew keener the more he thought about the trip and he was eager to go the next day, if possible. To this Mr. McGregor made no objection. "Make an early start," he suggested. "The earlier you get to the brook the better fishing you'll have. I'll speak to Jeff so that he'll have something for you to eat an hour before the regular breakfast. Better make all your arrangements to-night."

The Gang shared Bob's enthusiasm when he told them about the proposed trip, and hastened to secure Mr. McGregor's permission. They spent the evening getting their tackle ready and discussing plans. They were up next morning long before Reveille and ate a hasty breakfast that Jeff had prepared for them. Next they dug a tin pepper box full of worms. They had decided to paddle up to the head of the lake, Bob and Fred in one canoe, and Reddy and the Egg in another. Then they would leave the canoes on the shore and walk over to the brook.

The sun was just beginning to show above the ridge to the east of the lake when they stepped into the canoes. It promised to be a perfect day. The tops of the hills and their slopes were in the full sunshine, but the lake itself was still in the



shadow as they paddled briskly away from the camp.

"It's going to be a peach of a day!" exclaimed Fred.

"You're right," agreed Bob. "We'll have the time of our lives."

Bob's canoe was in the lead, with Fred at the bow paddle and Bob at the stern. Reddy and the Egg followed several yards behind.

"There's Daddy-long-legs," said Bob, pointing to a tall, long-legged blue heron that stalked along the shore a hundred yards off.

"Looking for his breakfast," said Fred. "Between the pickerel and the herons it's a wonder to me that there are any frogs at all in the lake."

"What's that on the end of that tree that hangs out over the water?" asked Bob.

"Where?"

Bob pointed to a dead tree that had fallen near the shore. The bank was several feet high at that particular point, and the tree trunk projected out over the water. At the very end of the trunk was a queer-looking mass that might have been almost anything.

"Looks as if it might be some kind of an animal. Let's take a closer view," suggested Fred.



Turning the canoe, they paddled over to the shore. As they came nearer the end of the log, the dark mass looked more and more like an animal.

"What the dickens can it be?" asked Bob.

Fred had been observing it closely, and as the canoe came within a dozen feet or so of the strange object he exclaimed in surprise. "Well, I never! Do you know what it is? It's a porcupine curled up fast asleep."

Closer inspection proved that Fred was right. A plump porcupine, bristling with white quills and looking much like a huge chestnut burr, had rolled himself up on the very end of the tree and gone fast asleep. There he lay on the log three or four feet above the water oblivious to the boys' presence.

Seeing Fred and Bob paddle over to the shore, Reddy and the Egg stopped paddling and the Egg called out, "What's up?"

In answer, Bob pointed at the "porky." Reddy and the Egg paddled over and joined the party of investigation.

"Gee whizz!" exclaimed the Egg. "That's the first time I ever saw anything like that."

"He's probably going to have a morning



plunge when he wakes up, just as we do," said Reddy.

"I'd like to see him take a high dive," laughed the Egg. "What's the matter with pushing him off?"

"Better let him alone," Fred warned him.

"Yes," said Bob. "We must go along." And he sent the canoe ahead with a vigorous stroke of his paddle. They had not gone far, however, when they heard a shout from the boys in the other canoe. Looking back they saw that Reddy and the Egg were greatly excited. They were yelling and flourishing their paddles wildly.

"What's the matter? Have you gone crazy?" shouted Fred.

Neither Reddy nor the Egg deigned to answer this question. They continued to yell and flourish their paddles excitedly. Looking more closely, Fred and Bob could see that Reddy and the Egg were greatly interested in something in the canoe. They poked and struck at it repeatedly. Turning their canoe Fred and Bob paddled back quickly, and as they drew near the other canoe a strange sight met their eyes. In the very middle of the boat was the frightened porcupine, his quills standing straight up. One



moment he would crawl toward Reddy, who would yell and poke him with the paddle; then the frightened animal would turn slowly and start to crawl back in the opposite direction, and the Egg would yell and strike at him with his paddle.

Bob and Fred burst into loud laughter. "Be gentle with him, Reddy," shouted Bob. "A Scout is kind, you know."

"Oh, shut up!" yelled the disgusted Egg.

"Why not bring him along for bait?" suggested Fred.

"Come and get him if you want him," called Reddy. "You're welcome to him."

"Who wished him on you?" shouted Fred.

"The Egg, of course," called Reddy. "He insisted on poking him, and somehow the canoe swung round and the porky fell into it."

Fred went into another fit of laughter. Just then, the porcupine, that had been quiet for a few seconds, started to shamble along the bottom of the canoe toward the Egg. The Egg struck at him with his paddle, but it hit the gunwale, slipped from his hands and fell overboard. The "porky" continued to shamble toward him.

"Get out of here, you brute," he yelled, hold-



ing on to each side of the canoe and kicking at the advancing "porky."

"Say 'please' to him. A Scout is courteous, you know," suggested Bob.

Here Fred went off into another uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Heh! Reddy! Stop him, can't you? He's coming right at me!" yelled the Egg.

Thus appealed to, Reddy half rose and reached forward in an attempt to scoop the porcupine out of the canoe with his paddle. His intentions were good but his judgment was bad. In his excitement he threw the canoe out of balance. Flip! In an instant Reddy, the Egg, and the porcupine were all floundering together in the water. At this sight Fred dropped his paddle and fell over backwards in the bottom of Bob's canoe shrieking with laughter.

"I'll bet the porcupine will beat them to the shore," he said when he could recover his breath.

Fred was right. The frightened porcupine was the first ashore. He climbed up the steep bank and crawled off into the woods. Reddy and the Egg clambered up the bank, the water dripping from their hair and clothes, disgust written on their faces.



"Well, I guess this ends our fishing trip for to-day," said Reddy ruefully.

"You don't catch me going back to camp in this condition," said the Egg. "We should never hear the last of it."

"But what else can we do?" asked Reddy. "We can't tramp round all day in wet clothes."

"We can build a fire and dry them, anyway," replied the Egg.

After some discussion this was what the unfortunate boys decided to do. To return to camp in their present condition was too humiliating to be considered. Fred and Bob retrieved the canoe, which was floating out in the lake half filled with water, and it was drawn ashore and emptied. Then a big fire was built, and the two boys took off their clothes and hung them up on stakes before the blaze.

"Hey, look at this!" said the Egg, holding up his dripping haversack that he had fished out of the canoe. It had contained a package of Aunt Jemima's pancake flour which, reduced to a white, soupy mixture resembling whitewash, was now smeared all over it. "That was to have been my lunch."

"Serves you right, Eggie, for being unkind to



animals. If you hadn't disturbed the dreams of that porky we should all be up at the other end of the lake by this time, safe and sound and clad in our right minds," said Fred.

The Egg was too disgusted to reply.

"Well, so long!" called Fred. "You know where we are going, and if you get dried out in time you'd better come along after us."

He and Bob pushed off their canoe and paddled up the lake, leaving their disconsolate chums sitting naked before a fire drying their clothes.



## CHAPTER X

### A QUEER FISH

BOB and Fred reached the head of the lake without further incident and, leaving their canoe there, set out for Bog Brook. Their way led along an old wood road that climbed up a ravine to the summit of a notch between two hills and then down the slope on the other side and on to a beautiful meadow knee-deep in lush grass and sprinkled with clusters of red Canada lilies.

"Did you ever see anything more beautiful than this in the Adirondacks?" asked Fred, as they stopped for a moment to admire the beauty of the little vale that was opening before them.

"I never did," confessed Bob, shaking his head. "This certainly is a great country."

"It's a fine place for deer," said Fred. "I shouldn't be surprised if we saw one."

Walking with as little noise as possible and speaking only in low tones, in order not to scare



any game that might be in the meadow, they went on to the brook. It was only a small stream, in some places almost hidden by close-growing alder bushes, in others widening out into broad, deep pools. In the pools they found a few trout. They were small, as Mr. McGregor had said they would be, but they were trout, and that meant a good deal.

"I never could understand how a man could sit for hours on the bank of a canal and fish for catfish," said Bob. "To me, catfish belong in the same class with snakes and lizards. They don't seem like real fish to me. Now these little speckled beauties are different." He held up for Fred's inspection a trout that he had just caught. Its sides were decorated with spots of red, yellow and blue, and its fin tips and belly were a beautiful salmon pink.

They had fished along the brook for some time with fairly good luck when suddenly Bob felt a tremendous tug on his line. "Whew!" he said to himself, "I guess I've got a big one this time."

When he tried to pull in his fish, however, he began to think that he must have caught his hook in a snag. But it seemed to move, though ever so little, and he looked over the edge of the bank



cautiously, yet eagerly, wondering whether it really was a fish on his hook. Yes, surely it moved. He drew his line in toward the shore. Then as he looked down at the water he saw a queer reptile-like head emerge. What was it? He pulled steadily and carefully. A speckled black and yellow neck followed the head, then the beginning of a body.

"Hey, Fred!" he called. "Come over here quick."

Fred came plunging through the deep meadow grass. "What's the matter?" he asked.

"I've caught something big and I don't know quite what. Look and see what it is. It feels like a whale."

Fred looked curiously down into the pool. "Why, Bob," he cried, "you've hooked a big turtle."

"A turtle!" echoed Bob incredulously.

"Sure thing!" said Fred. "And he's a buster."

In order not to break the rod they both took hold of the line and carefully tried to pull the turtle toward the bank. Little by little they drew him further out of the water. Soon they could see several inches of the big oval shell.



Then all at once, as if displeased with the taste of the hook, the turtle opened his mouth. There was a c-r-a-t-c-h,—out came the hook,—a plop, and the turtle dropped back into the pool.

The boys looked at each other wonderingly.

“Well, did you ever!” exclaimed Bob.

“No, I never!” echoed Fred.

“His throat must be lined with sandpaper,” said Bob, pulling in his line and trying the hook with his thumb. “It’s a good sharp hook, but it didn’t seem to make any impression on his mouth.”

“Try him again just for fun,” suggested Fred.

Bob put on a fresh worm and threw his line in again. A moment later he felt a steady pull on it, and when he tried to draw it in, it seemed to be hooked into something heavy and solid.

“I believe I’ve hooked him again,” he cried.

“We’ll land him this time,” said Fred.

Very carefully they drew in the line. This time they would make sure of him. They drew him over toward the shore. Then they pulled the black head out of water again. The neck appeared, and the edge of the oval shell. Bob trembled with excitement. “We’ve got him,



Fred; we've got him," he exclaimed. He spoke too soon, however. Just as they had drawn him half out of the water and could distinguish the outline of his big shell, and see his sprawling flippers clawing the slippery sides of the pool, c-r-a-t-c-h!—out slipped the hook, and plop!—back into the brook he fell.

"Good-night!" exclaimed Fred.

"He was only playing tag with us," said Bob. "My, wasn't he a big one!"

"He certainly was a grandfather," agreed Fred.

It was now about noon, and as the boys were feeling hungry they began to look around for a good place to eat lunch.

"Of course we want to cook our fish, don't we?" asked Bob.

"Sure," said Fred. "They're never so good as when they are cooked on the bank of the stream right after you've caught 'em. The first thing," he continued, "is to clean our fish. Do you know how to do it?"

"I'm afraid not," said Bob. "In the Adirondacks the guides always cleaned the fish." He spoke rather apologetically, for he felt a little ashamed to confess his ignorance to Fred. The



Scouts were so much more self-reliant than most boys he had known.

"Well, every Scout has to learn how to cook if he is to get beyond the Tenderfoot grade," said Fred. "And here's a good chance for you to have a lesson. We'll clean them in the brook."

The boys soon found a good place to clean their fish. Fred showed Bob how to rub the trout with sand until the slime was removed, then how to cut off the head, split the belly and remove the insides. Bob was slow and awkward with his first fish, but he did better with his second, and before he was through with his share he was able to clean them almost as quickly as Fred.

"I never knew trout were so dirty," he said, as he looked at his half-dozen dressed fish, all clean and ready to cook, lying in the frying-pan. "They always look so bright and pretty when you take them out of the water that I never thought of them as dirty."

"Yes, I know you'd think that way," said Fred. "As a matter of fact, a trout is awfully dirty. He is covered with a thick black slime, that has to be scraped off before he is fit to eat."

After some search they found a good place be-



side a big boulder where they soon fashioned a little fireplace of stones and started a fire. Then Fred showed Bob how to roll the fish in corn meal and fry them with strips of bacon. It was great fun, and Bob began to feel that he was fast learning to be a cook.

"Aren't you glad you came?" asked Fred, his mouth full of delicious, crisp fried trout.

"Glad! Wouldn't have missed it for anything! I'm sorry Reddy and the Egg aren't here, though."

"They would have been but for Eggie's foolishness. It's never wise to fool with a porcupine."

"Is it true that porcupines can throw their quills at you?" asked Bob.

Fred smiled. "No, that's merely superstition. The quills are very sharp-pointed and come out easily, so that if you get against them you are likely to get hurt. They have little barbs on the end, too, and work in instead of out. I had a dog that once tackled a porky and got his nose full of quills. Poor pup! How he did squeal! I had to pull out the quills with pincers, they stuck so. And I didn't get them out for a week. It's always best to leave a porky alone."



"There are just two trout left, one apiece," said Bob.

"All right, we don't want to waste such food as that," said Fred.

Each of the boys took one of the nicely browned little fish from the frying-pan and ate it with relish.

"There!" said Fred. "We've left nothing for the fairies. I suppose it isn't exactly good manners, but it's economical at any rate."

After lounging in the soft grass for half an hour or so the boys decided to resume their fishing. They had eaten for lunch all the trout they had caught during the morning, and they were anxious to take some back to camp that evening for Mr. McGregor. They washed their dishes in the brook, first filling them with wet sand and shaking them thoroughly to rub off the grease; then they picked up their belongings and started off down the brook. They had gone only a few steps when Fred stopped.

"Say, Tenderfoot," he asked, "did you put out the fire?"

"Why!" said Bob in surprise. "It was all out, wasn't it?"

For answer Fred pointed back toward their



lunching place. Wisps of blue smoke still rose from the charred embers of their fire. Bob looked at Fred inquiringly. "It's almost out," he said. "Shan't we leave it?"

Fred smiled and shook his head. "One of the first lessons in woodcraft is never to leave a fire burning in the woods. That sort of carelessness is responsible for most of the forest fires, and causes the loss of thousands of dollars' worth of timber every year. We must put out every spark."

The boys went back, and cutting alder switches, wet them in the brook, and carefully beat out the live coals.

"There," said Fred, when they had finished, "that's a thorough job. If every hunter and hiker in the woods was as careful as we have been there would be fewer forest fires."

"I'll remember that," said Bob.

The boys fished down through the meadow for an hour or so and met with fairly good luck. Then they came to a thick growth of alders where the brook divided into two small channels so overgrown with bushes that it was next to impossible to fish. They reeled in their lines and started to pick their way through the alders, expecting to



come out into the open meadow again presently. They had taken only a few steps through the alder growth when Bob, who was in the lead, heard a curious noise, half whistle and half cluck. Stopping and looking about him he saw a brown bird, as large as a small hen, hurrying along a few yards ahead of him, her feathers bristling and her wings half outspread, and making the queer whistling and clucking sound that he had heard.

“Look, look!” called Bob.

But Fred had heard the sound as soon as Bob and hurried to his side. “Ruffed grouse!” he exclaimed. “She has young ones.”

Running forward he began to brush aside the brakes and bushes.

“Ha! There are some of them!” he called. Bob caught sight of several little brown birds that darted about among the leaves and brakes. But they were so quick, and seemed to disappear so suddenly that he could obtain only fleeting glimpses of them. Meanwhile the mother fluttered on ahead of them, trying to attract the boys’ attention, but taking care to keep out of their reach. At length she took to the wing, flying off with a noise like thunder.



"Nobody could ever find any of the little ones now," said Fred. "She wouldn't have flown unless she was sure they had got away or were safely hidden."

"How knowing they are!" exclaimed Bob.

The boys fished down the stream for an hour longer with indifferent luck. The brook was shallow and there were few deep pools. They picked up a trout here and there, however. About four o'clock they stopped altogether.

"It will take us an hour and a half to get back to the lake," said Fred, "and fifteen or twenty minutes more to paddle down to camp. We haven't much more time than we need to get back by supper."

They reeled in their lines, unjointed their rods, and tied them up in their cases. Then they counted their fish. Fred had nine and Bob had seven. The biggest one was eight inches long.

"Not a bad string, eh?" said Fred. "And we ate half a dozen apiece for lunch."

"Dad would laugh at a string like this, I suppose," said Bob. "He always throws back all he catches below nine or ten inches."

Fred laughed. "That's altogether too swell



for this brook. If we were as particular as that, I'm afraid we should never bring home many trout."

Leaving the meadow they started to climb the slope toward the wood road that led to the lake. It was hot and close in the lowland and the mosquitoes were plentiful. The boys were glad to reach the high land where they could get a little breeze. The woods were rather open and the walking was fairly easy; they were not long in finding the road. An hour's walk brought them out to the head of the lake where they had left their canoe.

"My! Doesn't the water look good!" exclaimed Bob. "I'll bet it would feel good, too. Why not have a swim?"

"We're too warm to go in now," replied Fred. "We might have cramps."

"Well then, I suppose we had better go right along to camp if we expect to get there by super-time," said Bob.

They got into the canoe and paddled down the lake. As they neared the camp a crowd of boys assembled on the shore to meet them. Among them Bob and Fred recognized Reddy and the Egg.



"Poor Eggie! I'll bet he's sore," said Fred.

"No sorer than Reddy," said Bob.

"Well, did you catch anything?" shouted one of the boys, as soon as the canoe was within easy hearing.

"Sure we did," called Fred.

"Huh! I smell skunk," shouted the Egg in derision.

"It isn't skunk you smell; it's porcupine," called Bob. Whereupon the Egg flushed deeply and looked very much crestfallen.

"What's the joke about porcupine?" asked Tommy Fielder.

"Ask the Egg; he knows," said Fred.

"Hey, Eggie, what does he mean?" asked Tommy. But the Egg, foreseeing awkward questions, had suddenly remembered that he had pressing duties elsewhere and set off up the path from the lake.

That night at the camp-fire Mr. McGregor, in accordance with his regular custom, asked Fred and Bob to give an account of their day's trip. They did so, Fred telling the story up to lunch-time and Bob taking it up from that point to the end. They omitted the adventure with the porcupine and Reddy and the Egg's unexpected



baths, much to the relief of their two companions. Mr. McGregor was greatly interested in their experiences with the turtle.

"There are a good many turtles in this neighborhood," he said, "and some are very old. A few years ago a hunter shot one on the lake. It was enormous, nearly three feet long. There were several initials carved on the shell and a date more than forty years old."

"Shot one!" exclaimed Bob. "Why should he kill the poor beast?"

"Why should he indeed?" said Mr. McGregor. "It was a thoughtless thing to do. We have no right to take the lives of wild creatures in the woods except for protection or to supply ourselves with necessary food. We shall find the woods much more interesting if we come into them to observe and study the wild life and not to destroy it. The best way to hunt is with a camera."

"Oh! if we had only had a camera this morning!" exclaimed Fred.

"Yes. If we only had!" said Bob.

"We had a fine chance to take a picture of a pair of ducks," said Fred.

"You mean duckings, don't you?" asked Bob.



“Oh, I don’t know; ask Reddy,” said Fred, grinning.

“Tell us the joke,” said Mr. McGregor with a smile.

“We don’t dare to,” replied Bob. “You’ll have to ask Reddy and the Egg. They know.”

But Reddy and the Egg refused to enlighten them, and soon afterward Fred blew Taps and the camp settled down for the night. It had been a wonderful day.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE OVERNIGHT GAMES

BOB had several times heard the older boys speak of the Overnight Games and what fun they were, and he had looked forward to them with great eagerness. When, therefore, one morning at Assembly Mr. McGregor announced that he was planning for some games of this sort Bob was delighted. Now at last he was to have a chance to see for himself just what these much-talked of games really were like.

“The boys who have been at the camp before,” said Mr. McGregor, “know what these games are; but for the benefit of the new boys I will explain. First, the whole camp will elect two leaders or captains. These leaders will then choose, turn by turn, the boys they wish to have on their side, until the whole camp has been divided into two parties. These parties will go out into the woods a mile or two from camp and



select headquarters or camping grounds. Here they will remain for about two days and engage in their play.

“The object of the games is to see which party can capture the most prisoners from its opponents and hold them. This gives both parties a fine opportunity to devise plans for capturing their prisoners, and in case their own men are captured, for rescuing them. It is important that at the outset neither party knows where the ‘enemy’ camp is located. This offers splendid opportunities for scouting and executing surprise attacks. Each party carries its own provisions and is thrown on its own resources. Besides affording splendid opportunities for planning attacks and ambuscades, and for exercising strategy, the games place a great deal of responsibility on the leaders. The old boys will agree with me, I am sure, that the Overnight Games provide some of the most interesting incidents of our camp life.”

There was a general murmur of assent at Mr. McGregor’s words, and Bob could see that the boys were excited at the prospect of the games.

“Now,” continued the Commissioner, “if you like the idea, the first thing for you to do is to



elect two leaders—one for each side. Nominations are in order.”

Fred Ashleigh, Tommy Fielder and two or three other boys were quickly nominated, but Fred and Tommy were elected by a show of hands. Thereupon Mr. McGregor asked them to step forward.

“Now then,” he said, “you fellows must choose sides, and as the boys are chosen they must come forward and gather round their leaders.”

A coin was flipped to determine who should have first choice and Fred won. Immediately he chose Bob. Tommy Fielder promptly chose Reddy McTurk. Fred made a wry face at that because it broke up the Gang. Fred then chose the Egg, whereupon Tommy chose Ralph Maxon. There was great interest among the boys at this point, each one wondering if he would be chosen next. In a few minutes the boys had all been selected, and as luck would have it they divided evenly—twenty-eight on a side.

“Each captain must appoint two lieutenants,” said Mr. McGregor.

Fred immediately appointed Bob and the Egg as his lieutenants, while Tommy Fielder appointed Reddy McTurk and Ralph Maxon.



"Now," said Mr. McGregor, "if you two officers will come up to the headquarters tent I will give you your instructions."

When the leaders had assembled he took from a locker a government map of the neighboring country and spread it out on the table.

"There," he said, "I have marked in red ink the location of the boundary lines for the games. You go straight up the valley past the lake to the old dam over the stream about a half mile above the head of the lake. The dam marks the lower limit of the games. An imaginary line drawn across the valley from the crest of the ridges on each side marks the lower boundary, while a similar line drawn across the valley at Echo Cliff, about a mile and a half farther up, marks the upper boundary. Is that clear?"

"I suppose you mean for the side boundaries to run along the crest of the ridges on both sides," said Fred.

"Precisely. The ground for the games will cover about a mile and a half each way, extending from Echo Cliff on the north to the old dam on the south, and east and west from crest to crest of the ridges."

"That's clear," said Tommy Fielder.



“Now somewhere within those limits both of your parties will establish your respective headquarters. You must, of course, try to conceal from one another the location of your camps, and you will need to exercise extreme caution to succeed in this. A time limit will be set for the games—say from two o’clock Monday afternoon till nine o’clock Wednesday morning. During that period you must try to capture as many of your opponents as possible.”

“How are we expected to capture prisoners?” asked Bob. “Must we grab fellows and hold on to them?”

“No, you don’t need to use force,” replied Mr. McGregor. “It is enough to touch your opponent on the arm. After being captured, however, a prisoner has the right to escape if he can. Prisoners have to be watched.”

“But how is a fellow to escape capture?” asked Bob. “Must he run or is he allowed to fight?”

“There must be no fighting. The boy who is seen first and recognized immediately becomes the fugitive and must try to escape capture by running or hiding. If his pursuer gets near enough to touch him he is considered captured.”



"Are we allowed to tie up our prisoners?" asked Bob.

"Yes, or you can take their parole, that is, their promise not to escape. This is seldom done, however, for it spoils a good deal of the fun if the prisoners don't have to be watched. Now from this moment you leaders assume responsibility for the physical condition of your men. This is Saturday, and the games start Monday. That means that between now and Monday when you leave camp you must watch your men carefully to make sure that they keep in good shape and that none of them gets sick. If one of you has to leave camp Monday morning a man short through injury or sickness, you are handicapped to just that extent."

"Do you mean that if one of our fellows gets sick between now and the time we pull out on Monday the other side doesn't have to leave a man behind so as to keep the numbers even?" asked Bob.

"Exactly. There is just the same number of boys on each side now, and the number will not be changed. It's up to you to see that you don't lose anybody through sickness or injury."



"How about supplies and tents?" asked Tommy.

"You are to travel as light as possible," replied Mr. McGregor. "But of course you must have all that you need to keep you well fed and comfortable. Jeff has instructions to give you the necessary food supplies, and you must decide just what utensils, blankets and tents you will need.

"You ought to appoint one or two boys to look after your commissary work, and one or two others to supervise the matter of tents and blankets. You see this expedition will give you valuable experience in more ways than one. It will give you some idea of the value of organization."

Bob grew more and more interested as he listened to Mr. McGregor's instructions. He saw that the Overnight Games were more than mere games. They were devised to give the boys experience in meeting responsibility, in planning and organizing, and in directing the activities of a group of individuals. The training involved was of the utmost practical value. It would help the leaders to become more efficient.

"Between now and Monday," continued Mr. McGregor, "I suggest that you leaders look



over the ground where the games are to take place and decide on the camping sites. Keep the choice of your own camp secret, for it is perfectly legitimate from now on for each party to try and learn as much as possible about the plans of its opponents and to turn this information to its own advantage. There is one more thing. In order to distinguish members of one party from those of the other I suggest that all the boys on one side wear a badge—say a handkerchief tied round the left arm. It ought to be something that can be seen at a distance.”

“Why wouldn’t it be a good idea for each of our bands to have a name?” asked Fred.

“It would. Do as you like about that,” replied the Commissioner.

Fred’s suggestion met with favor, and after some debate it was decided that his party should be called the Redbirds and should wear red bands around the left arm to distinguish them. Tommy Fielder’s band decided to call themselves the Hoodoos and to wear a badge on the left arm consisting of the letter H inside a circle, marked with white chalk like this (H).

When these matters had been settled, the boys left the headquarters tent and set to work to get



their parties organized. First they consulted Jeff, and after much debate decided on just what they should need to take with them in the way of supplies. It was a formidable list, for they were to be away from camp nearly two days; and fifty-six boys will eat a lot of food in that time. Jeff was generous with advice, especially in regard to eggs.

"Be mighty keerful 'bout dese yer aigs, boys," he said. "Yer kain't carry 'em like yer do per-taters. Las' year some fool boy carried a box of aigs wrapped up in a sweater and den frew it down on de groun' where some 'un laid on it. Sakes erlive, yer oughter seen dat sweater when he brung it back ter camp. Looked like a small-pox flag; it sure did, he, he!"

The question of supplies was settled at last, and boys were appointed from each party to take charge of them and see to their transportation. Then after much consultation it was decided that two tents would be taken with each party, and certain boys were appointed to attend to their transportation. It only remained to select the camp-site. In order to discuss their plans without being overheard Fred, Bob and the Egg retired to the Crow's Nest.



"Now," said Fred, when they had climbed to the top and were comfortably seated on the moss, "it is very important, as you know, that we keep all our plans secret from the Hoodoos and learn as much as possible about their plans."

"It's hard luck that Reddy McTurk is on the other side," said the Egg. "It breaks up the Gang."

"Yes," said Fred. "That's why Tommy Fielder chose him. He knew that if the whole Gang was against him he wouldn't stand any show of winning."

"Reddy's a sharp chap all right," said the Egg, "and we'll have to keep a special watch on him. If we get licked it will be because of Reddy."

"We aren't going to get licked," replied Fred, "and we're going to put Reddy out of the game first thing."

"How are you going to do that?" asked the Egg.

"That's something for us to figure out," replied Fred. "Now, Bob," he continued, "I want you to make it your business to shadow Reddy and think up a plan to capture him. If



we can put him out of running I know we'll win easily."

"I'll see what I can do," said Bob. "I guess I can think up something."

"This afternoon," continued Fred, "the Egg and I will go up the valley and look the country over. We'll scout around keeping out of sight of the Hoodoos, and select the likeliest place for a camp. Probably Tommy and his lieutenants will be doing the same thing. If they do, I want you to shadow them and see if you can't find out where they decide to locate their camp. Don't let them see you. When they go into camp Monday we want them to think that we haven't the slightest idea where they are. Then they won't be so careful and we shall have a good chance to surprise them."

After some further conversation about their plans they scrambled down from the Crow's Nest and returned to camp. As soon as they had disappeared a boy swung himself to the ground through the trees at the back of the big rock.

"Gee!" he exclaimed, "that was a close call. When Fred looked over the back of the rock I thought he would surely see me. So Bob is going to shadow me, is he? We'll see about that.



That's a game that two can play at," and Reddy McTurk set off briskly down the path to the camp. The Hoodoos had already gained some valuable information about the "enemy."

Without seeming to watch them, Bob kept a sharp eye on Tommy Fielder, Ralph Maxon, and Reddy McTurk, and when they left camp together soon after dinner and set off up the valley, he started after them. He had taken the precaution to put on a pair of moccasins so that he could walk through the woods almost noiselessly. During most of the afternoon he followed as closely as he could; and whenever they stopped for consultation he crawled as closely as he dared in order to listen. There were several places which offered good camp-sites, and it was evident from their conversation and gestures that Tommy and his lieutenants found it difficult which one to choose. Late in the afternoon, however, they stopped for a final consultation, and after some talk referred the matter to Reddy McTurk. There was considerable thick undergrowth here and Bob had succeeded in getting near enough to hear the conversation clearly. Besides, Reddy spoke in a loud, clear voice, as if he didn't care who overheard him.



"The best place, fellows," he said, "is right here. It is near good water and it's sheltered from the wind."

"What do you say, Ralph?" asked Tommy.

"I agree with Reddy."

"All right, we'll establish our headquarters here, then," said Tommy. As he spoke he struck the ground sharply with a stick that he was carrying.

"Now, of course, Fred Ashleigh and his crowd will be trying to find out where we have decided to camp. There may be some of his scouts out here in the woods this minute trying to get a line on us; so we must keep mum. Don't tell anyone where we are to be. That must be kept between us three until we bring the fellows up here Monday."

"Right you are, Cap," agreed Reddy.  
"Mum's the word."

Tommy and his lieutenants set off on their return to camp and Bob followed at a safe distance. When he reached camp he saw Tommy and Ralph talking with Mr. McGregor, but Reddy was nowhere in sight. Remembering Fred's orders that he was to shadow Reddy Mc-Turk, Bob hunted the camp over for the missing



boy. For a time Reddy was nowhere to be found. Then all at once Bob saw him appear from the direction of the valley trail. Bob wondered where he had been. Was it possible that he had not returned with Tommy and Ralph? For an instant Bob felt worried. Reddy was a shrewd fellow and must be kept in sight.

It was not long before Fred and the Egg appeared, and beckoning to Bob, they led the way to the Crow's Nest.

"We've found a peach of a place for our camp," said Fred, as soon as they had scrambled up on the rock. "It's in a kind of little hollow on the side of a hill with high rocks behind so that we can't be surprised from the rear. There is a spring near by; so we shall be fixed all right for water. The woods below are rather open and our sentries can see the Hoodoos coming if they should try to rush our camp."

"That sounds fine," said Bob. Then he told them how he had spent the afternoon and of his good luck in finding out the location of the Hoodoo camp.

Fred and the Egg were delighted. "That's bully, Bob!" exclaimed Fred. "You're a fine Scout. We'll beat them sure."



“It’ll be great to beat Reddy,” said the Egg.

They would have felt less certain about beating Reddy if they could have seen him at that moment. Clinging to a narrow, moss-covered shelf on the back of the rock, he had again heard almost every word that they said.



## CHAPTER XII

### REDDY MCTURK SCORES

MONDAY came at last and dawned bright and fair. The whole camp was up early and soon the boys were busily engaged in preparations.

"Don't bolt your breakfasts," warned Mr. McGregor with a laugh. "This is the last chance you'll have to eat Jeff's good cooking for a couple of days and you had better take advantage of it. Start with a good meal under your belts."

But the boys were too excited to take the Commissioner's advice. Most of them gobbled their breakfasts and rushed back to their tents to get things tidied up and to lay out their equipment for the games. There were many details to attend to, and several false starts were made. Once Tommy Fielder's party had actually got under way when Tommy discovered that the tents had been forgotten; so he had to halt his forces and send back for the missing articles. The Hoodoos were given a half-hour's start in



order that they might reach their camp unobserved. Then the Redbirds followed single file, swinging along the wood road that led up the valley past the edge of the lake. In half an hour they had reached the old dam that marked the lower boundary of the games. Here they crossed the bridge and struck into the woods on the western bank. When they were well in under cover of the trees Fred Ashleigh halted his band.

"From now on, fellows," he said, "we must be very quiet. If we are not, the Hoodoos will hear us at a distance and locate us. We can talk, of course, all we want to, but let it be in a low voice, and let's be careful not to have any loud laughing or yelling."

A twenty-minute walk through the woods brought them to the camp-site that Fred and the Egg had chosen on the previous Saturday. It was a little, grassy clearing on the side of the hill, a kind of terrace with a semicircle of rocks rising at one end. This would prevent surprise from three sides; and by posting sentries on the hillside below it would be easy to get warning of the approach of the enemy from that direction. The boys were delighted with the place.

"Just made for a camp," said Dimples. "The



only trouble is that if the Hoodoos captured our sentries they'd have us in a pocket. We couldn't get out."

"We could climb over the rocks, couldn't we?" asked Alec Thompson, a small, wiry little fellow.

Dimples looked down at himself in dismay. "*You* might," he said, "but I never could in the world without wings."

Alec laughed. "I'd like to see you with wings," he said. "You'd look like a giant June bug."

The tents were quickly pitched and covered with loose branches to hide them from view. The supplies were thrown inside. By this time it was noon and the boys were hungry. Small fires that would give off very little smoke were built, and in a few minutes bacon and eggs and pancakes were cooking. Bob was surprised to see how independent and capable the boys were. They handled their utensils deftly and cooked their food without wasting any materials. When dinner was over they heated water from the spring near by in a big kettle that they had brought and washed their dishes. One or two of them grumbled at this, but Fred insisted.



"We mustn't be sloppy simply because we haven't Uncle and Old Four Eyes here to watch us," he said. "You all know that the camp has to be kept neat and the dishes and cooking utensils kept clean; so don't let's grumble but go ahead and do what's right."

The dishes were washed and everything tidied up. Then Fred called the boys around him.

"Now, fellows," he said, "we must get busy right off. We aren't going to wait for them to come and capture us, but we are going to capture them. We know where their camp is and Bob and I are going to lead a party to capture it. I'll leave four fellows behind to guard our camp. Keep two sentinels out on the slope of the hill below. The signals for our side will be the hoot of an owl. One hoot means simply, 'I am coming'; two hoots mean 'Danger! The enemy is coming'; three hoots mean 'Come and help me.' Now if the Hoodoos should by any chance discover our camp and attack while we are gone, you fellows who are left behind must try to leave the camp and get word to us. Then we shall try to recapture it. If any of you get captured, lie low and watch for a chance to escape."

Leaving four boys behind, the main body of



the Redbirds left camp, Bob leading the way as guide. The plan was to keep together till the neighborhood of the Hoodoo camp was reached, then to divide forces. While Fred with half of the fellows would rush the camp from one side, Bob with the rest would lie in wait on the other side and capture the Hoodoos as they retreated.

Progress through the woods was at first rather easy. There was very little underbrush and the ground was fairly smooth; but when they reached lower ground and neared the stream, the undergrowth became thicker and swampy places were frequent. The going was not difficult, however, and they reached the brook in twenty minutes or so. Crossing on the stones they climbed up the opposite slope and came to a wood road. Here Bob halted the party to get his bearings. As nearly as he could judge, the camp-site that Tommy Fielder and his two lieutenants had decided on was up this road a hundred yards or two. He explained the situation to Fred.

"Now's the time to do a little scout work," said Fred. "You take a couple of fellows and go ahead. When you have located the camp for sure, send word back to us and we'll join you."



Bob took two boys with him and went forward in the general direction in which he judged the Hoodoo camp lay. They advanced carefully, stopping every now and then to peer ahead cautiously and listen. They heard no voices, however, and as they walked on without coming upon any signs of the "enemy," Bob began to think that he must have mistaken the locality. All at once the roadway widened out into a little clearing and they stopped and looked about them. This seemed like the place. On Saturday Bob had taken note of the surroundings. There was the tall hemlock on the farther side of the clearing; there was the big boulder by the side of the road. Yes, this was surely the place. But there was nobody here. How was that?

As Bob stood there looking about him in doubt and surprise, something unusual caught his eye. Near the big boulder a slender branch cut from a sapling was sticking upright in the ground, and fastened on the end of it was a piece of white paper. Bob called the attention of his companions to the paper.

"Looks like a note of some sort," he said. "Let's investigate."

They walked up to the stick cautiously. It



proved to be a twig newly-cut and the paper was stuck in a notch at the end. Bob pulled it out and unfolded it. On it were written in lead pencil some characters in what seemed to be code. The three boys stood there together staring at the characters.

"Now what do you suppose this means?" said Bob.

Hardly had he spoken when there was a sudden noise. He looked up just in time to see Reddy McTurk and two or three other fellows almost upon them. Like a flash Bob turned and ran. Over his shoulder he noticed that the Hoo-does had captured both of his companions, and Reddy McTurk was coming after him like the wind. Yelling at the top of his lungs as a warning to Fred and his band, Bob sped down the road. His sudden burst of speed discouraged Reddy, who soon stopped chasing him. Bob paused to take breath.

"Well, Joe Miller," he said to himself, "Reddy has scored the first point."

A few minutes later he found Fred and the rest of the party impatiently awaiting him down the road. Fred listened to Bob's story with surprise.



"How do you suppose they expected us to come to the clearing?" he asked.

Bob shook his head. "I don't know," he said. "It was luck they didn't capture me."

"It was an ambush all right," said Fred. "But what puzzles me is that Reddy should have been expecting us to come here. Another thing that looks queer is this: they haven't made their camp at the clearing where you heard them say they would. They've fooled us there, too."

Bob was thinking hard. Could it be that Reddy had discovered that he was trailing them on Saturday and had purposely led him wrong about the camp location? It began to look as if Reddy had laid a trap for him. "And he almost got me, too," he said to himself.

"Well," said Fred, breaking in on Bob's reflections, "they've scored first, and we mustn't let them score second. We must find out where they are camped. I think we had better divide into two parties. You take half of the fellows and go on up the road and see if you can't locate them. If they see you first and chase you, draw them on to us and we'll capture them all."

Taking ten boys Bob led the way back up the road, leaving Fred to follow with the other boys



a hundred yards or so behind. Bob walked fifteen or twenty yards in advance of the main body of his band and in order to guard against surprise he placed a boy in the woods on each side of the road with orders to keep abreast of him and to advance through the woods as noiselessly as possible. In case an "enemy" was sighted the alarm was to be given by signal.

Bob advanced at a good pace, but as quietly as possible, keeping a sharp lookout ahead and stopping every now and then to listen. Soon he had reached the clearing where his two companions had been captured a short time before. He circled about the big boulder at a safe distance to avoid a second ambush and passed on. He had gone some fifty or sixty yards farther when he heard a noise in the woods to his right. He stopped to listen. Someone was running through the woods. Then came two hoots of an owl—the danger call. Bob turned and ran back toward his main band, but he had taken hardly a dozen steps when he saw them running up the road toward him, and close on their heels came a crowd of Hoodoos. Even as he looked he saw several of his men tagged and captured. Again he turned and started to run up the road. His



hope of escape in this direction was soon cut off, however, for as he passed a big oak Reddy Mc-Turk leaped out upon him. This time it was sheer luck that saved Bob. Reddy's foot caught in a root and he stumbled. Before he could recover himself Bob had escaped into the woods.

Bob ran till he was out of breath; then he stopped and crouched behind a tree to rest. Here was a pretty kettle of fish. Reddy had scored again. Twice in one day! Bob reckoned up probable losses. Two boys had been captured in the first encounter and no doubt five or six had been taken in the second. And so far the Redbirds had not one prisoner to their credit. This was a discouraging outlook.

Bob was uncertain what to do next. Should he try to find Fred and his party? Or should he go back to camp and await his return? He decided it would be best to try and find out first what had become of Fred; so at the end of a few minutes he struck off through the woods in what he judged to be the direction of the old road. He soon found it and followed it cautiously down the little valley toward the dam. He saw nobody, however, and heard nobody. What had become of Fred? Had he returned to camp or



had he gone on up the road? Then Bob remembered the signals they had agreed upon. Stepping behind a tree so that he could look up and down the road without being seen, he imitated the hoot of an owl. He called several times without getting any answer. Then when he was about ready to give up trying to summon anyone, he heard a faint reply. Again he called, and again came the reply. A little later Alec Thompson appeared down the road. As Alec approached his tree Bob stepped out into sight.

"Well, Alec," he said, "Reddy has scored again."

Alec grinned ruefully. "He sure has," he replied.

"Where are the rest of the crowd?"

Alec knew little more than Bob. He had been the only one of Bob's advance guard to escape Reddy and his Hoodoos, and what had become of Fred and the others he did not know. The question was: What should they do? Alec was for returning to camp. "Two of us can't do anything," he said. "We must have reinforcements. We may find Fred and the rest of the crowd at the camp. If not, there are the four fellows we left there and by joining them we



shall have a squad big enough to do something."

Bob reflected. "We can't accomplish anything against the Hoodoos until we learn the location of their camp. That's the first thing for us to do. So I propose that we go on up the valley and see if we can find them."

After some discussion the boys decided to do this and set off up the road. They passed the places where the two encounters had occurred and went on some distance without seeing or hearing anything unusual. All at once Bob stopped. "Look at this," he said as he picked up a handkerchief from the road. On examination it showed the initials F. A. in one corner.

"This is Fred Ashleigh's!" exclaimed Bob. "I'll bet he dropped it as a signal. He must have been captured and passed this way."

A couple of hundred yards further on they heard voices.

"Hold on," said Bob, "we've got to go slowly now. They will have sentries out and we mustn't let them see us."

Taking the wood road they advanced with great caution. The sound of voices became louder, and presently the woods grew lighter



ahead of them. They were evidently approaching a clearing. Here they dropped on their hands and knees and crept along cautiously, taking advantage of every bit of cover. In this way, creeping from bush to tree trunk, and from tree trunk to rock, they at length reached the edge of a little clearing. Peering through the underbrush they looked out upon the Hoodoo camp!

It was in an open space, on a little knoll, just at a turn of the road. In the very center was a big oak tree, and around this oak they saw to their astonishment a large group of Redbirds.

"Holy smoke!" whispered Bob. "They've got nearly the whole gang."

Bob was right. Sitting or lying on the ground about the tree in the center of the clearing were Fred Ashleigh, the Egg, and the greater part of their band guarded by several Hoodoos. Bob looked again more carefully and noticed that they were all tied to the tree with a piece of clothesline. Even their hands were tied behind their backs. Evidently the Hoodoos did not mean to take any chances losing their prisoners.

Alec counted them. "There are twenty-one," he said.



"Great Scott! That means that there are only seven of us left, including the four fellows back at the camp," whispered Bob. "There must be another one of our fellows out in the woods somewhere."

As Bob and Alec lay watching from the bushes, the Hoodoos began to build fires, and in a few minutes the delicious smell of frying bacon reached the boys' nostrils. In the excitement of the games they had not realized that it was supper-time. Now they began to feel hungry.

"My, that bacon smells good!" whispered Alec.

"I want something besides smell," replied Bob.

"That's all we shall get here," said Alec. "The only way to get that food is to be captured."

"You're right," replied Bob. "We must beat it."

Back they crawled cautiously and in a few minutes they were at a safe distance from the Hoodoo camp.

"Well, now we certainly are up against it," said Alec.

Bob shook his head. "You're dead right," he



replied. "The only thing for us to do is to hike for camp by the shortest cut. Perhaps after we have had something to eat we shall be able to think up a scheme for rescuing some of our crowd."

They struck off down the road at a good pace, and after following it for some distance cut through the valley. Crossing the brook on the stones they climbed the slope toward their own camp. They were tired and hungry but they could look forward to a cheery camp-fire and a hot supper.

"I hope the boys will have fires going," said Alec. "I'm as hungry as a grizzly bear."

"So am I," said Bob. "Toasted frankfurters and pancakes for me!"

"Yum-yum!" exclaimed Alec, smacking his lips. "I can already taste them."

They walked up the path briskly toward the camp. Suddenly Bob stopped.

"Hold on, Alec," he said. "This doesn't seem just right."

Alec turned toward him inquiringly, for Bob was looking straight ahead, keenly examining the path, and listening intently.

"Where are the sentries?" he asked. "I don't



hear any voices, and I don't see any signs of our men."

"Probably they're eating supper," said Alec.

Bob shook his head. "I'll tell you what," he said, "let's work round to the slope of the hill behind the camp and look down and see what's going on there. I'm kind of suspicious."

They struck into the woods to the right of the path and cautiously made their way up the slope until they were well behind the camp. Then they worked downward to the edge of the steep rocks where they could look over into the little hollow in which the camp lay.

Bob studied the ground below him for several moments. Then with a gasp he silently beckoned to Alec.

"What do you know about that?" he whispered.

Grouped together in an angle of the rocks, their legs tied with clothes-line, sat the remaining five members of the Redbird party. Lying on the grass near by eating his supper, were Reddy McTurk and a half dozen Hoodoos. Again Reddy McTurk had scored.



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE TABLES TURNED

BOB and Alec crawled into the woods, and when they were at a safe distance stopped for a council of war. For a minute or two neither of them spoke. Then Alec broke the silence.

"Well," he said, "what the dickens are we going to do for supper?"

"Search me!" exclaimed Bob. "I guess we'll have to go to bed hungry."

"Bed?" questioned Alec. "Where?"

Bob grinned. "I guess it'll have to be the open air for us."

Alec shook his head. "I don't mind sleeping out," he said. "I've done that more than once. But I do mind going without supper. And there's breakfast, too! Gee! Bob, I guess it's all up with us."

Bob grinned again ruefully. "It certainly looks bad, Alec," he said, "but it isn't all up with us yet. Maybe we can find a comfortable place to sleep."



The next half hour the boys spent in cruising about looking for a sleeping place, which they found at last in a sheltered nook under the lee of a big boulder. A fallen tree made a partial barrier on one side, and a couple of friendly hemlocks furnished a roof.

"This is bully!" exclaimed Bob. "We couldn't ask for anything better than this."

But Alec refused to be comforted. He was hungry and was almost ready to surrender himself to the Hoodoos for the sake of getting something to eat. Bob laughed at him, and though he was very hungry himself, he worked hard to keep up Alec's spirits.

"Don't be downhearted, Alec," he said. "We'll turn the tables on them to-morrow; see if we don't."

For an hour or so they had a rather dismal time snuggled down in their retreat. The night was chilly and the mosquitoes soon found them out and attacked them industriously. Partly for warmth and partly to drive off the little pests they built a small fire. In doing this they knew that they ran the risk of being discovered, but they felt that it was necessary to take a few chances.



"If we don't build a fire, we shall either be eaten by mosquitoes or freeze to death," said Bob.

"And if we do build a fire we may be captured. In that case we shall get something to eat," said Alec, tossing on another stick of wood.

The fire made it cozy and pleasant on the moss under the hemlocks; and the big boulder at their backs cut off the wind nicely. From time to time they fed the little fire with dry twigs. Soon they began to nod in spite of their hunger, and long before their usual bedtime they were both sound asleep.

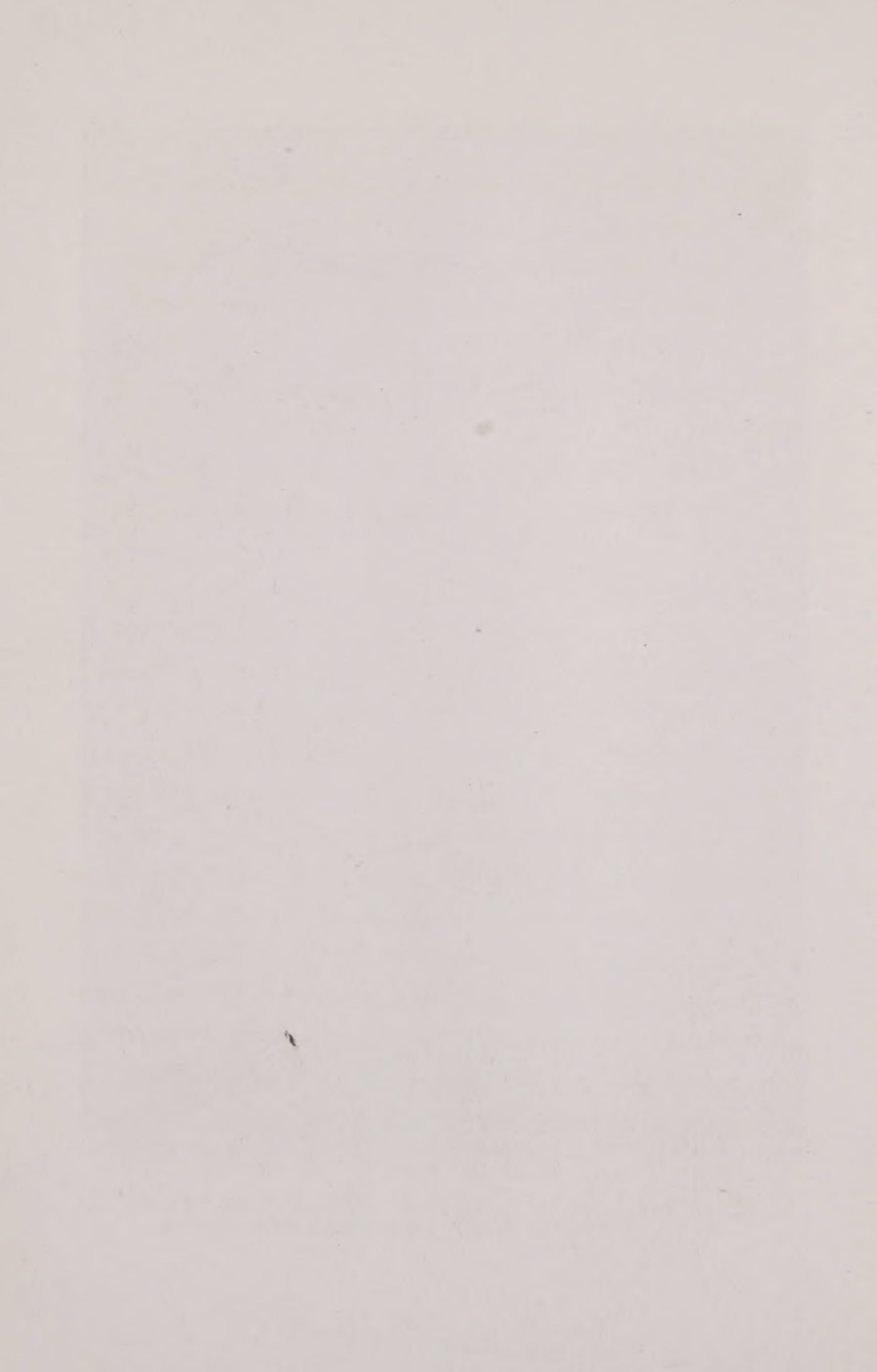
Several hours later Bob awoke with a sense of discomfort. He was cold. Not realizing where he was, he felt for his blankets. By degrees he awoke and smiled at his mistake. The fire had burned out, except for a few glowing coals. Fumbling about he found a handful of leaves and some twigs and threw them on the embers. After blowing them vigorously for a minute or two he succeeded in starting a blaze. The warmth was delicious, and he drew close to the fire. Presently he looked at his watch. It was twelve o'clock. Suddenly a thought struck him. Why not make a night attack on the camp that Reddy and his followers now held? Perhaps they could recap-





IT TOOK ONLY A MINUTE TO MAKE HIM SECURE.







ture some of their own men and take Reddy and his Hoodoos, too. The more he thought of it the better he liked the idea. He waked Alec and explained his plan. Alec was not enthusiastic.

"Oh, what's the use?" he said. "They'll have sentries. We can't surprise them. I'm tired."

"They'll be sound asleep, I'll bet," said Bob. "They must be as tired as we are; anyway let's try it."

Electric torch in hand Bob led the way. Alec followed reluctantly, but was more enthusiastic when he became warm. After some difficulty they found the path to the camp. Quietly they crept forward. At the edge of the Hoodoo camp they came upon a sentry sound asleep. It took only a minute to make him secure. Bob gagged him with his handkerchief. Then leaving him with his hands tied behind his back and his shoes and stockings hidden in a bush near by, they stole silently up to the camp. As Bob had expected they found everyone sound asleep by the smouldering camp-fire. They had plenty of blankets and were too comfortable to be the least bit wakeful. Five Hoodoos besides Reddy Mc-Turk lay in a row on one side of the fire. On



the other side, fastened to each other by a piece of clothes-line, lay a number of captive Redbirds. The end of the clothes-line was tied around Reddy's leg.

Bob and Alec lost no time. Quickly and quietly they untied the captives, and as quickly and quietly they tied up the sleeping Hoodoos. Bob was sorry there were not more. When all were secure, they twitched the rope that held them and gave a loud yell. Reddy McTurk sat up and rubbed his eyes. One by one the other boys awoke blinking.

"Hey! What's up?" asked Reddy.

"You're pinched, that's all," said Bob, flashing his electric torch in Reddy's eyes.

Reddy looked his disgust. "Oh! say, cut it out, will you!" he exclaimed.

Great was the rejoicing when the captured Redbirds were thoroughly awake; and how they laughed at Reddy and the other Hoodoos! As for Reddy, he was thoroughly crestfallen. Up to this point he had been wholly successful. It had looked as if the games were going to be a clean sweep for the Hoodoos. But now here he was a prisoner with five of his men! The tables were turned. He was still more disgusted when



Alec went out and presently returned with the captured sentry.

"You're to blame for this," Reddy declared. "If you hadn't been asleep at your post we shouldn't be prisoners now."

The luckless sentry looked sheepish and made no reply. The shoes and stockings of all the captured Hoodoos were taken away and hidden; then a watch was set and the boys turned in again. Bob himself stood guard for the first hour. Then he woke one of the Redbirds and lay down for a snooze.

Breakfast was rather late in the Redbird camp next morning, but it was a happy occasion—at least for the Redbirds. The seven captured Hoodoos sat barefoot in a row, looking on while the Redbirds prepared and ate the morning meal. There was much laughter, and many jokes were made at the expense of the unfortunate captives.

After breakfast Bob called a council of war.

"Fellows," he said, "the Hoodoos will play safe from now on. They are 'way ahead of us, and their game will be to hold their prisoners and not lose any more of their own men. When they don't hear from Reddy they will likely send a couple of fellows over here to see if everything



is all right. Now we must get those fellows without fail. So I am going to post skirmishers down the path to watch for any Hoodoos."

Things turned out exactly as Bob had expected. Not hearing from Reddy, Tommy Fielder sent a couple of boys to look for him. The Redbirds lying in wait by the path easily captured both of them. Two hours later a second pair whom Tommy had sent out were captured. This made eleven prisoners in all. Bob was elated at the success of his plan.

"We are evening things up, fellows," he said. "Tommy himself may come next to look for Reddy, and we must lay a trap for him. We'll leave one fellow at the camp to watch the prisoners, and the other six of us will lie in wait down the path. If Tommy and his crowd come we must ambush them. Each fellow must bag his man. If we can do this we may win."

Again fortune smiled upon the Redbirds. Soon after dinner Tommy and a half dozen Hoodoos were ambushed near the Redbirds' camp, and though Tommy succeeded in escaping, four of his men were triumphantly brought in.

The rest of the afternoon was uneventful. The Hoodoos were still ahead in prisoners and



evidently concluded to take no chances; they intended to play safe. After supper Bob held another council of war.

"We have bagged fifteen Hoodoos," he said. "That leaves thirteen of them at large. Now they hold twenty-one of our fellows and there are only seven of us left. They are therefore six ahead of us. We must even up somehow, and we have only till nine o'clock to-morrow to do it. The time is getting short."

"Can't we recapture some of our own crowd?" asked Alec Thompson.

"A good idea. It's worth trying, I think," said Bob. "Has anyone a plan to suggest?"

Nobody could suggest anything except a silent midnight raid such as Bob and Alec had made the night before. So it was decided that two boys should be left at the camp to guard the prisoners, while Bob and Alec with the others to assist them should try to rescue their comrades at the Hoodoo camp. It was a desperate plan, but the time was now short and if the Redbirds were to win they must take long chances.

About midnight, accordingly, Bob and his four companions set out. A waning moon dimly lighted up the woods. They crossed the brook



and struck into the old road that led to the Hoodoo camp. All at once Bob, who was leading the file, saw a large dark object in the road ahead. He stopped instantly and peered through the half-light, trying to make out what it was.

"What is it, Bob?" whispered the boy behind him.

In reply Bob pointed at the object in the path ahead. Silently the boys crowded together and peered down the path. Presently the object moved.

"It's—it's some kind of an animal," said Alec in shaky tones.

"Do you suppose it's a bear?" asked one of the boys.

"Maybe," replied Alec; "bears have been seen about here."

The boys stood still, scarcely controlling an impulse to run, and gazed at the black bulk in the shadows ahead. Suddenly the unknown monster shook itself and made a noise that was half sneeze and half cough. Bob laughed. A light had dawned upon him. The strange animal must be an old horse. He had seen it grazing in the road Saturday before when he had been trailing the Hoodoo leaders in their search for a camp-site.



Approaching the animal he found that his conjecture was correct. At sight of the old broken-down horse an idea came to him. If they had been startled by the horse in the dim light, why wouldn't the Hoodoos be startled, too? Why not use the horse to help them recapture their comrades? Hastily Bob explained his plan. It met with enthusiastic approval.

"Wait a minute!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "Has anybody got a white piece of cloth?"

"What for?" asked Alec.

"To decorate the old nag and make him look queer and ghost-like."

"Say! that's a bully idea, Bob!" cried several boys.

A few minutes later the horse was decorated with a white handkerchief over each ear and several undershirts hanging from his flanks.

"Gosh! I'd hate to meet that horse in the dark now and not know what it was," said Alec. "You sure have got a great head on you, Bob. I can just picture those Hoodoos."

Tying a rope round the neck of the outlandish-looking animal they started up the road again.

A few yards up the road a sentry challenged them in a trembling voice. Bob did not reply



but led the old horse into the woods. Again the sentry challenged; his voice broke as he did so. Then as if he understood what was wanted, the old horse sneezed. "Great Scott!" they heard the sentry exclaim. "What—what *is* it?"

For half a minute there was silence. Then Bob prodded the old nag with a stick. The animal gave a little jump and a squeal that was half grunt. This was too much for the sentry, and he turned and ran to the camp a few yards farther on. "Hey, Tommy!" they heard him call. "There's something—awful—awful queer down the road there."

A murmur of voices rose from the camp. Then several boys came slowly along the road, stopping every few steps to listen and peer through the darkness. Suddenly as if at a signal from Bob the horse began to paw the ground.

"There! Look! Do you hear that?" they heard one of the boys say. "See! it moves."

"What the dickens is it?" asked another.

Here Bob again prodded the old horse in the ribs. The obedient beast jumped and squealed. This was too much. The Hoodoos turned and ran wildly back to the camp just as the sentry had done before. The whole camp was now in a



hubbub. Everybody seemed to be awake, and everybody was asking questions or trying to make explanations. Bob felt that now was the time to assault in force; so he struck the old horse a resoundingslap. The old nag jumped and lumbered forward toward the camp, crashing noisily about in the underbrush. As he plunged through the bushes into the little clearing where the camp lay the Hoodoos scattered. In the confusion that followed Bob and his companions rescued their captured comrades.

“For the love of Mike!” exclaimed the Egg as he recognized Bob. “Are you the cause of all this row?”

“That’s what, Eggie,” said Bob. “Where’s Fred?”

“Here I am, Tenderfoot,” called Fred’s cheerful voice.

There was much rejoicing among the Red-birds. The prisoners were released, and here they were all together except for the two whom Bob had left behind in charge of the prisoners at their own camp.

“Well, now,” said Fred, “we’d better take along with us anything that would come in handy in the way of eats.”



This was a good suggestion. The Hoodoos' supplies were raided. Every Redbird took something, if not something to eat then a blanket, and with their booty they set off for their own camp. How they yelled and cheered! There was no longer any need for silence. They had completely turned the tables on their opponents.

When they reached their own camp they found everybody awake and eagerly awaiting their return. At sight of Reddy McTurk and the fourteen other prisoners Fred Ashleigh and the Egg laughed heartily.

"Well, Reddy," called Fred, "I'd never believe it of you. How could you let a Tenderfoot put it over on you?"

Reddy grinned ruefully. "You needn't laugh, old man. It took a Tenderfoot to rescue you."

"That's right," Fred acknowledged. "If it hadn't been for Bob and his ghost-horse we should be prisoners still, and you fellows would have won the games."

Though it was now one o'clock nobody was in the mood to go to bed. The fire was heaped high with wood. The flames rose in the air, lighting up the rocks and the surrounding trees. Then the food captured from the Hoodoo camp was



passed around and there was a feast. For more than an hour the boys sat about the fire eating and singing. Then sentries were posted and they rolled up in their blankets and went to sleep.

“Well, Bob, this is better than last night, isn’t it?” said Alec Thompson, as he settled down for the night.

“It sure is,” declared Bob.



## CHAPTER XIV

### BACK AT THE SCOUT CAMP

BREAKFAST was late at the Redbird camp. After the strenuous sport of the past two days, ending with the midnight attack and the late supper of the night before, the boys were tired and sleepy. Fred did not hurry them but let them lie in their warm blankets and get thoroughly rested.

"You see," he explained in reply to Bob's inquiry, "it's a part of our duties as officers to see that the fellows keep in good condition. We have practically won the games already. Between now and nine o'clock there's not much chance of Tommy being able to beat us out with the small crowd he has left; so we may as well take things a little easy."

At half-past seven Fred blew Reveille. This was the first time he had used his bugle since the games started. Now he did it partly as a note of defiance to the defeated Hoodoos. They would hear the call ringing out across the valley



and realize that it was an announcement of triumph.

The boys slowly turned out and were soon busy with breakfast. They sang as they fried their bacon or cooked their pancakes, cracking jokes at the expense of their prisoners. Reddy and his fellow Hoodoos took their defeat good-naturedly.

"After all you never would have beaten us by yourselves," said Reddy. "You had to ring in Si Turtelotte's old horse. That was hardly fair."

"Oh, don't squeal, Reddy, you were fairly beaten," said Fred. "There was nothing in the rules against using horses or anything else we could ring in to help us out."

"We only sent in our cavalry to finish off," said Bob. "That's where we showed good tactics."

"I'll bet Tommy and his crowd are having a slim breakfast this morning," said the Egg. "We cleaned up about everything they had last night."

The Egg was right about the slim breakfast of the Hoodoos. At nine o'clock Fred got out his bugle and sent the long notes of Victory ringing out over the hills. A few minutes later the Red-bird sentry appeared, followed by Tommy



Fielder and the remains of his band. Tommy halted and held up his hands grinning.

“Kamerad!” he called.

There was a shout from the Redbirds and cries of “Go home, you German! Back to your trenches, Fritzie Boy.” Tommy waited patiently until the Redbirds had quieted down.

“Well, fellows, time’s up now and the games are over,” he said. “You’ve licked us good and plenty, that’s sure. If you’ve got anything left that we can set our teeth into, for Pete’s sake let us have it. We didn’t have much but crumbs for breakfast.”

“You’re just in time to clean up the grub, Tommy,” said Fred. “It would be a pity to have to take any back.”

So Tommy and his hungry crowd scoured the camp, eating up everything that was left in the way of food. At first they were too busy to talk, but when they had taken the edge off their appetites they were more sociable.

“Well,” said Tommy, shaking his head as he sat on the ground beside Bob munching crackers and cheese, “I thought we had you. You see Reddy knew your plans, so we could watch every move you took. Up to last night everything



went all right for us. I don't see now how you beat us out. Only I never saw anything that scared me so much at first as that old horse draped with white. That was a clever idea."

"It was this Tenderfoot here who did it," said Reddy, laughing and nodding to Bob. "He led the night attack that canned me and my raiding party at the camp the first night, and he led the attack on the camp that got back all the prisoners last night."

Tommy Fielder smiled good-naturedly at Bob. "Well, you did a mighty good job for a Tenderfoot," he said. "Knowing your plans as we did, the chances were all in our favor, and for a while things seemed to work our way. You certainly outmanœuvred us at the end, though. We shall have to admit that."

The boys made short work of packing up for their return, and an hour after setting out they filed into camp, Redbirds intermingled with Hoodoos in friendly comradeship. They were in high spirits. The games had been a great success. They had tested their woodcraft, their energy, and their resources. There had not been an accident even of the slightest kind, and everyone had returned feeling thoroughly fit.



Mr. McGregor and Mr. Bradley greeted them cordially. "It's fine to have you back, boys," said the Commissioner. "It's been mighty lonesome without you."

"It's good to be back, sir," answered Fred.

Gathering round Mr. McGregor the boys gave him an account of their expedition. He listened with amused interest, and when they came to the tale of the attack on the Hoodoo camp and the charge by Si Turtelotte's old horse he laughed long and loudly.

"Well," he said, "I had planned to give a prize to the boy who did the best work on either side. I said nothing about it before because I wanted it to be a surprise. Now tell me who you think deserves it."

There was a pause. The boys looked at each other, each hesitating to speak first. Then Reddy McTurk spoke.

"Well, Uncle, it's a little hard for us older Scouts to have to admit that we had it put over us by a Tenderfoot, but it's a fact. This snake-charmer and turtle-catcher here is the boy that deserves the prize." As he spoke he took Bob by the arm and pulled him forward.

Mr. McGregor smiled. "Reddy has given his



opinion," he said. "Has anyone else anything to say?"

"I guess Reddy is about right," said Fred Ashleigh. "If it hadn't been for Bob, the Red-birds would have been licked good and hard. You're the goods all right, Kid," he added, slapping Bob on the shoulder.

Bob protested. It was Reddy McTurk, he declared, who deserved the prize. But Bob was overruled. The unanimous opinion was that he had done more than any other one Scout on either side.

"You'll have to give in, Bob," said Mr. McGregor. "You're modest; and I'm glad you are, but there's no doubt that you deserve the prize."

Here the Commissioner drew from his pocket what looked like an automatic pistol and held it out to Bob.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "It isn't as dangerous as it looks. It's only a new model electric flashlight. I'm glad for you to have it, and I'm sure you'll find it useful."

It was indeed a beauty. Without the closest inspection it would have passed for what it looked to be—a deadly automatic pistol.



After dinner the Gang once more met at their old rendezvous on the Crow's Nest. The mail had just come and all of the boys had letters from home. Bob had a long one from his father. "I was glad to get your letter saying that you had become a Scout," he wrote. "If ever the world needed men it needs them now. The Scout movement is preparing the boys of to-day to be the men of to-morrow, the men who will have to take their places in the new world and play their part in meeting its demands. Welcome every opportunity to develop your physical strength and your mental alertness. Be a good Scout and you will grow into a better man."

As he lay there on the soft moss of the big rock Bob thought over the events of the past few weeks. How his ideals had changed! He flushed with shame as he remembered that he had once thought of the Scouts as "rough necks." How silly he had been! He thought of Ted Patrick and his former close friends and how Ted had warned him to keep away from the Scouts if he wanted to belong to a high school fraternity. "I don't care if I never join a frat," he said to himself. "These boys here are good enough for me!" Then the words of his father's



letter came into his mind: "Be a good Scout and you will grow into a better man."

"I'll take Dad's word for it," he said to himself. "I'll show them that I can be a good Scout, and I guess that the rest will take care of itself."



## CHAPTER XV

### THE THREE-DAY HIKE

FOR several days the Overnight Games were the chief topic of conversation among the boys. Gradually, however, new interests absorbed the attention of the camp. Bob found no lack of things to do from day to day. Mr. McGregor was a past master of the art of handling boys and he contrived always to have something on foot to keep them busy. Bob discovered that Mr. Bradley was an expert canoeist and he took great pleasure in going out on the lake with him and learning to do "stunts." He soon was able to handle his canoe with ease. Under Fred Ashleigh's urging he also improved his swimming and began to practise diving. He made rapid progress at this also, and lost all fear of the water.

One morning after he had dismissed Assembly Mr. McGregor asked Bob and Fred to remain. "You're getting on first-rate, Bob," he said. "You're making good as a Scout all right. I



think it's time, however, for you to get away for a few days on a hike. I want you and Fred to plan to leave camp about next Thursday for a fifty-mile hike."

"Fifty miles!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, it will take you three days. Talk it over together, get your kit and your supplies ready, and choose your route. I want you to learn what it means to be thrown entirely on your own resources for a few days. I think you'll have the time of your lives."

Bob was surprised and pleased at Mr. McGregor's suggestion. Since he had been at camp several of the older boys had gone on long trips that had taken them away for a few days, and when they returned they had told great tales of their experiences. Bob had been hoping that he might go on such a hike himself and had even mentioned it to Fred. He realized now that Fred had probably spoken of the matter to Mr. McGregor and that to his friend's thoughtfulness he owed his present chance to make the desired trip. After a short talk with the Commissioner Bob and Fred hurried off to tell the Gang about their intended journey and to make their plans. They assembled at the Crow's Nest and



spent the next hour or so deciding on a route. Reddy and the Egg were as usual free with suggestions. They were both old Scouts and familiar with the neighboring country. With their assistance Bob and Fred finally laid out their course on a map, clearly marking each stage of the journey.

The next few days dragged slowly. It seemed to Bob as if Thursday would never come, and his impatience grew as it drew near. A dozen times a day he pulled his map from his pocket and spreading it out before him studied it intently. The casual observer would have seen nothing but a confused mass of dots and letters and tangled lines, but to Bob there was something magical about his map. For what delightful possibilities of adventure lay hidden in the countryside which it represented! With his finger he traced slowly the course that Fred and he had laid out for the three-day journey. At the end of the first day they would have reached this little cross which he had made with a blue pencil; or perhaps if they walked a little faster they would get to this other little cross a few miles farther on. At the end of the second day they would have reached still another little blue cross, fifteen



or sixteen miles farther, and the third night they would have completed their circuit and be back at the Scout camp again. In all it would be a fifty-mile tramp. "Some journey, Joe Miller," he said to himself. "And suppose it should rain. That would be nice, wouldn't it?"

Thursday came at last, and after much packing and repacking they were ready to start. The Egg and Reddy McTurk were on hand to help them, though their assistance was of doubtful value. The Egg was generous with advice.

"Got any snake medicine with you, Bob?" he asked. And when Bob answered that he had not, the Egg told him that he was making a mistake.

"It's easy to see that you were cut out for a snake-charmer," he said, "from the way that one by the lake took to you. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if some old rattler laid for you on this trip to make his mark on you."

"Oh, cut it out, Eggie! You make me nervous," said Fred. "There hasn't been a rattler seen in this country here for years."

"There hasn't, eh!" said the Egg. "If that's what you think, you ought to go talk with Si Turtelotte. He says that when he runs out of



cash he catches a rattler before breakfast and boxes him up and sends him to the New York Natural History Museum. They give him five dollars apiece for 'em."

"Ho, ho! Do you believe Si Turtelotte's yarns?" said Fred scornfully. "The only time he ever saw snakes was when he used to look into the nose of a big black bottle."

Mr. McGregor was on hand to give them a hand-shake and a few words of advice. "If anything happens, send me a telegram or call me up by telephone. Remember that you will never be many miles distant from a telephone or telegraph office."

In spite of their attempts to get an early start, it was nearly nine o'clock before they left camp. The morning was beautiful and sunny with a promise of greater heat in the air. For the first mile or so they were accompanied by an escort of boys, but at length their admirers left them and they were at last on their journey. The first three or four miles of their way led through the hills. As the heat of the sun increased their packs grew heavier every moment. Several times they stopped to rest.

"This frying-pan is a nuisance!" exclaimed



Bob, stopping for the fourth time to readjust it. "I don't see why we brought it anyway."

"You'll see to-night when we make flapjacks," answered Fred. "They'll taste mighty good with maple syrup."

As a matter of fact the boys were carrying pretty heavy loads. Knapsacks, blanket rolls, canteens, hatchets, and cooking utensils made a wearisome burden. The blanket rolls gave them most trouble, for besides being heavy, they were hot and they chafed their shoulders. To make things worse, one of Fred's shoes rubbed his foot somewhat and made walking uncomfortable.

They went on until one o'clock, however, and then stopped for luncheon. They had followed for five or six miles the valley in which the Scout camp lay and then climbed over the hill into another valley where they found themselves on the hillside above a big reservoir.

Picking out a shady place in the edge of the woods overlooking the lake, they threw off their loads and lay down to rest.

For some time they felt too tired and hot to eat, or even talk. They lay stretched at full length on the ground, enjoying the gentle breeze that fanned their faces. Fred took off his shoes



in order to rest his feet. When both boys were somewhat refreshed they opened their packs and ate lunch.

Then Bob spread out his map. "Here we are," he said, indicating their position with his pencil. "We followed the valley along this road. Then we crossed the stream over this bridge, and followed the road to the left up over this hill. This is the Park Lake Reservoir," he said, reading slowly from the map, "and as near as I can make out we've walked about ten miles."

"That isn't bad considering the heat," said Fred. "Besides, my foot has bothered me a good deal. I think we'd better lie round here till it gets cooler. Walking will be easier then!"

"Good idea!" said Bob.

Weariness and the heat had their effect on the boys. In a short time they were both asleep.

Bob was first to wake up. He had forgotten where he was and had a vague feeling that someone was talking to him. As he became more fully awake he rose to his elbow and looked about him. Fred lay on the ground a short distance away, apparently still sound asleep. While Bob sat there listening he heard voices. Where did they come from? Looking round he listened intently.



Yes, someone was talking. The low murmur of voices came from beyond the fringe of bushes to his left. Suddenly one of the voices was raised impatiently and he distinctly heard the words, "Of course I'm not an American, you fool. Not me!"

The import of the words and the slightly foreign accent roused him like a shot. Instantly his drowsiness was gone. He was wide awake. This looked like trouble.

With the utmost caution he began creeping through the bushes at his left. He moved very slowly, looking carefully in every direction and with every sense alert. The sound of the voices continued. A minute later Bob came to the edge of the high bank. Peering over, he saw directly below him not fifteen feet away, two men seated on the ground. One wore a special policeman's uniform and the other was dressed in the rough clothes of a laborer. Both men were smoking pipes.

"It's easy," said the laborer who spoke with an accent. "You don't take no chances because you don't see nothin'—you stand on guard at six o'clock. The other fellow is in bed. So he don't see nothin'. I fix this—see?" Here the man



glanced quickly about and Bob dropped down in the bushes. Then the fellow continued with an evil leer, "I put the bomb under the dam by the sluice—see? You don't see nothin'. You're on the other side of the dam—remember that!"

"Yes, yes, I know," exclaimed the policeman impatiently. "I'm paid to guard the dam and if anything happens I see where I get sent up for ten or fifteen years, if I get pinched."

"You won't get pinched, you fool. You don't see nothin', that's all."

"But how do you make your getaway? There's the telephone at the shack. If I don't call up the sheriff at Butler the other fellow will. The whole country'll be looking for you inside of half an hour."

"Say, you *are* a kid, ain't you? I *want* you to telephone. That'll help save your skin, but it won't hurt me 'cause the wires is cut. I'll see to that."

The policeman smoked in silence for a while. "How much do I get out of it?" he asked at length.

The foreigner hesitated a little. Evidently he was uncertain how much would be sufficient to bribe his man. "Fifty dollars," he said.



This was greeted with a contemptuous laugh. "Fifty dollars! Did you think I was such a cheap skate as that? Take another think."

"Make it a hundred, then," replied the foreigner with a scowl.

"That's more like it," said the other. "You're getting warmer. Make it two hundred and we'll call it a trade. I sure need the money." After some haggling a hundred and fifty dollars was decided upon as the price of the special policeman to "see nothin'," and the money was paid over in bills. Bob lay at the top of the bank, his heart thumping and his cheeks flaming with excitement as he watched the foreigner count out a hundred and fifty dollars and give it to the policeman.

"I guess you don't want a receipt for this, do you?" asked the policeman, grinning and stuffing the bills into a dirty leather pocketbook.

"No, I guess not," replied the foreigner. "I got no boss to show it to. I'm a Red and we Reds don't recognize no bosses never. We're all equals. Even the worst of us is as good as the best of us. An' wait till the Reds rule this here country; you want to be on the right side. This here little bit of fireworks to-night is just a be-



ginnin'. You'll see how cap'tal falls like in Russia and how us Reds ——"

The fellow would have gone on indefinitely if the Special had not asked him what time he intended to blow up the dam.

"Nine o'clock to-night. I blow up the sluice and the water runs out. It's the first step toward equality and ——"

"All right, all right," interrupted the Special. "I'm supposed to act scared and to call for help and try to telephone, am I? I get you."

After some further words the two men rose and separated. The policeman sauntered, pipe in mouth, down the open hillside toward the dam, while the foreigner disappeared in the woods close at hand.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE

FOR several minutes after the men disappeared Bob lay in his hiding place with conflicting emotions. While they had sat there below him discussing their treacherous plot Bob's senses had been keyed up to a high pitch. His ears had been strained to hear every syllable that was spoken, and his eyes had taken in every detail of the men's appearance. Now that they were gone and the seriousness of the situation came over him Bob was appalled. Would anyone ever have believed that such a thing could happen to him? It was like the sort of thing that one read about in detective stories, but nobody ever expected it to happen to oneself. And here it was, a vicious plot to blow up the reservoir. If carried out it would injure the reservoir to the value of thousands of dollars, cause serious inconvenience and perhaps even suffering and distress to thousands



of people who were dependent on this water supply; there would be a flood that would entail great property loss and loss of life in the valley below. Here was a critical situation to meet, the greatest crisis ever presented to him. What should he do?

First he must tell Fred about it and together they would devise a plan. Crawling back through the bushes Bob found Fred still asleep. After being shaken several times he sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"Hello!" he said. "I must have had quite a nap."

Bob said nothing. He was still feeling upset by what he had seen and heard. Something in his manner struck Fred as unusual and he looked at Bob keenly.

"Well, what's up?" he asked. "You look awfully queer."

"You'll look queer, too," said Bob, "when I tell you what I've just heard." Then he told Fred all that had gone on beyond the bushes.

Fred was speechless with astonishment.

"Well," he said at last, "we're up against something real, Matey, and now's the time to show what our Scout training has done for us."



We must not only think it out, but we must put it through. What time did the fellow say the thing was to be pulled off? ”

“ Nine o’clock.”

Fred looked at his watch. “ It’s now half-past three.”

“ There’s plenty of time to get help.”

“ But how and where from? ”

“ Couldn’t we go down to the dam and tell the other guard? ”

“ How could we do it without making the bribed one suspicious? If he smells a mouse he’ll put the foreigner wise and the thing will only be postponed. We’re just boys but there are two of us and we’re *Americans*.”

“ Couldn’t we get word to the loyal guard by waiting till after six o’clock when the other goes on duty? We could even ask to use the telephone and call up help in that way.”

“ That would work all right, perhaps, so long as the fellow who has been bribed doesn’t see us. If we can manage to keep out of his sight and find a way to tell our story to the honest guy we can then work out a plan with him to catch both of the conspirators.”

“ That’s the thing to do.”



"Now what's the nearest place that we should be likely to get a sheriff from?"

Bob got out his map. "Butler seems to be the nearest place of any size," he said.

"How far away is it?"

Bob calculated the distance on the map roughly. "About six miles, as nearly as I can make out."

"If we could get a telephone message to the sheriff in Butler he could probably get here with a posse in three-quarters of an hour."

"Yes, if the road is half decent."

"Well, the first thing for us to do is to see if we can't get hold of the honest guard. He must be on duty now."

By working through the bushes the boys reached a place from which they could see the dam and the shack without being observed themselves. They could see the two guards sitting on a bench near the dam. There was ~~nothing~~ to do but wait. But though they waited for more than an hour the two men did not go out of each other's sight. It looked as if the dishonest guard were purposely keeping the other under observation.

"Couldn't one of us sneak down to the shack



and telephone without being seen?" suggested Bob.

But Fred pointed at the position of the building. It stood out in the open only a few rods from the dam and some distance from any cover. It would be impossible for anyone to get to it without being noticed.

"You'd have to wait till dark," he said.

"And it isn't dark till eight o'clock or so," said Bob.

There seemed nothing to do but wait. But though they waited another long hour their chances looked no better, and when at six o'clock both men proceeded to eat their supper together sitting on a bench in front of the shack, the situation began to appear hopeless.

"Only three hours more!" exclaimed Fred. "Something must be done quickly. We can't afford to leave everything to the chance of telling our story, or of using the telephone in the shack. One of us must hoof it to Butler for the sheriff, while the other one stays here on the job."

"Let me go, Fred," said Bob.

Fred shook his head. Then he said slowly, "No, Kid, I can't do that. I'm more used to hiking about in the woods by myself at all times



of the day and night and I think I could probably get to Butler more quickly than you could. You stay here and watch, and if you see a chance to do anything, why, pull yourself together, grit your teeth, and go to it."

Taking Bob's map Fred studied it carefully for a minute or two. "The main road seems to run up through the valley," he said, "but there's a short cut over the hills marked here that ought to save a couple of miles. That's the way for me to go."

"Better go by the plainest road," said Bob.

Fred laughed. "When you've been a Scout as long as I have," he said, "you won't worry about following a trail. I ought to get into Butler by a quarter to eight and be back here with the sheriff by half-past eight or quarter to nine at the latest. That doesn't leave much of a margin, but it's enough."

"All right," said Bob. "I'll stick here on the watch, and if I see any way to tell my story to the fellow down there at the dam or to telephone I'll do it."

Fred tightened his belt, pulled down the brim of his hat, and set off along the road. Bob watched him till he disappeared; then he returned



to his watch. Again the words in his father's letter came before his mind: "If ever the world needed men, it needs them now. Be a good Scout and you will grow into a better man."

Bob shut his teeth with a snap.



## CHAPTER XVII

### ALONE AT THE RESERVOIR

FOR a time after Fred had gone Bob felt very lonely. Here he was left absolutely by himself to deal with a dangerous situation. Somewhere hiding in the woods near by was a man of desperate character, bent on carrying out a plan for the destruction of the reservoir, and ready to use any means for executing it. Bob had no doubt that he was armed and that he would not hesitate to use force even to the extent of committing murder to accomplish his ends. The bribed Special, if not a dangerous character, was nevertheless unscrupulous and would be likely to shut his eyes to any act of violence. The loyal guard was the one hopeful element in the problem. As he lay there on the hillside, Bob tried to comfort himself by thinking of the guard as his friend. If they could only get in touch with each other the problem of foiling the enemy would be solved. "Yes, Joe Miller," said Bob to himself, "it's up



to me to get hold of the loyal American. He and I together can spoil the whole dirty game."

But as time wore on no opportunity presented itself. For another hour or so after Fred had gone both policemen remained about the shack talking. Occasionally the bribed Special would stroll across the dam to the other side of the reservoir, but he was never out of sight of the other for more than a minute or two. Meanwhile Bob satisfied his hunger with some crackers and cheese from his pack, washed down with water from his canteen. The water was warm but Bob did not dare leave his hiding place to go for fresh water.

At length, to his great relief, the sun dropped behind the opposite hill and the valley was filled with shadows. By degrees the shadows deepened and dusk came on. Soon he would be able to get down to the shack without being seen. His heart thumped at the thought, and his cheeks began to burn. "I wonder if I'm afraid," he asked himself. Then the words of the Scout Law flashed into his mind: "A Scout is brave. He has the courage to face danger in spite of fear." Was he brave? He didn't know. He would try to be, anyway.



He looked at his watch. It was quarter to eight. Fred must be just getting into Butler. Help would soon be on the way. It was almost dark. In a few minutes he would go down to the shack. All at once he saw the loyal guard disappear behind the shack to reappear a minute or two later with a motorcycle. Bob's heart gave a leap. Could it be that the guard was going away? He watched him breathlessly. The man bent over the machine. All at once it began to chug-chug, and then to Bob's dismay, the guard jumped on the machine and dashed off up the road.

Here was a situation indeed! His friend was gone! He was now entirely alone. What should he do? For a minute or two he felt helpless and almost hopeless. There was nothing to do now, he told himself, but to wait for Fred to come with help. He could do nothing alone. But was that true? The words spoken by Mr. McGregor at his initiation as a Tenderfoot flashed into his mind: "Be prepared. Be ready to meet any emergency that may occur." His mind became clearer and his nerves a trifle steadier. Here was his opportunity. He would seize it. Fred might indeed come with help in time, but he would not



depend on Fred. He would depend on himself. This was *his* problem and he would solve it.

"We'll go down and telephone anyway, Joe Miller. That's our next move," he said to himself.

He pulled off his heavy walking shoes and drew on an extra pair of socks that he had in his knapsack. This would enable him to walk with less noise, and the double thickness of socks would protect his feet from the stones. Then he buckled on his hatchet. It was the only weapon he had besides his pocket knife, and he had a vague feeling that it might prove useful. Was there anything else? Oh, yes! He had almost forgotten his flashlight. He would need that to find his way about the shack. He drew it from his knapsack, and then pulling himself together left his hiding place and started down the hillside.

He stepped cautiously, stopping to listen every half dozen steps or so. Everything was quiet. In a few minutes he had reached the end of the dam. Here he stopped again. He could hear nothing but the whistling of the Special who seemed to be somewhere on the bank of the reservoir a hundred yards or so off at the right. Si-



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lently he crossed the dam and walked up the gentle slope to the shack. Here he stopped again and listened. There was not a sound; the shack looked dark and unoccupied. Coming quietly up to the door he fumbled for the latch. There was a screen door in place and it was not fastened. He opened it and found that the main door of the shack was ajar. Quietly he stepped inside. He paused again and listened. He could hear nothing but the beating of his own heart, and that seemed to him as loud as the throbbing of a motor.

Now the question was to find the telephone. Bob had not the slightest idea where it was; he must use his flashlight, but he must also be careful or the light would show through the windows. Kneeling on the floor and keeping the light low in front of him he turned it on. The room was flooded with a dim twilight. He was startled at so much brightness and afraid that it might be seen from the outside; so he turned the flashlight off again immediately. After listening a moment and hearing nothing he turned it on again. Carefully he examined the room. Yes, there was the telephone over in the corner. Covering the end of the torch almost entirely with his sleeve



he crept on his hands and knees toward it. First he must find the book. It was three or four minutes before he discovered it stuck behind a tobacco jar on a desk near by. While looking for it he stopped several times to listen, but he heard nothing. At last he had the book, and bending over it in the corner he found the town of Butler. Whom should he call up? He knew nobody there. The sheriff? But he did not know his name. He thought a minute. How about Police Headquarters? Yes, here it was "Police Department, 235." His hand shook so that he dropped the book and it fell on the floor making a loud noise in the quiet room. Bob was startled, and he turned out his flashlight and listened again. But he heard nothing and then, plucking up his courage, he took down the receiver. For an instant or two he waited, straining his ears, but he got no response. Then he pushed the holder up and down to rouse the operator at the other end. Still no response! Again he listened, and again he pushed the holder up and down. Not a sound! Slowly the truth dawned upon him. The wires had already been cut!



## CHAPTER XVIII

### FRED GOES FOR THE SHERIFF

AFTER leaving Bob, Fred Ashleigh set off down the road at a swinging pace. He knew that he ought to reach Butler by eight o'clock at the latest; that would allow him an hour and three-quarters to make the distance. Ordinarily on the road he would walk about three miles an hour, but if pushed he could do four or perhaps a little more. He was in unfamiliar country, however, and dependent on Bob's map for his directions and distance. Also, it would soon be dark. This made things uncertain.

During the first half hour everything went well. He kept to the main road for about a mile, following the valley past the reservoir. Then he turned and cutting across the valley, forded the stream that fed the reservoir. Here he left the main thoroughfare and took a wood road that led up the hill. According to the map this road cut across the country and struck the main road for



Butler again about three miles farther on, thus cutting off a big bend and saving a couple of miles.

The climb up the hill proved to be pretty steep and the footing bad. The roadway had been washed out by rains and was full of large round stones. In some places, in fact, there was no roadway at all—nothing but a gully through which Fred had to pick his way slowly. By the time he reached the top of the hill his chafed foot had begun to trouble him again, and walking was anything but comfortable. It was nearly seven o'clock. Climbing the hill had taken longer than he had expected, but from now on the way ought to be for the most part down-hill. Therefore he felt no anxiety.

At the top of the incline he stopped for a minute or two to rest; then he hurried on. For the next mile the road was down-hill and fairly even. Then all at once it came out in a tract of cleared land, partly overgrown with bushes and small trees. Here it seemed to disappear. There were roads and paths running in different directions, some of them evidently made by woodcutters; others were cattle paths. There was no one clearly defined road. Fred was puzzled. He



tried first one path and then another, only to find that it ended in a brush heap or a pile of cordwood. At last he stopped in despair and sat down on a log to rest and get his bearings.

To his dismay he found that he was lost. He had turned about so much in trying to find the right road that he could not tell from just what direction he had come. In vain he studied the outlines of the woods about him. There were no landmarks that gave him any help.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed aloud, "I'm lost!"

He looked at his watch. It was half-past seven. The sun was already out of sight behind the woods, and in another half hour it would be dark. If he couldn't find the road before then, he would have to spend the night in the woods. Meanwhile there was Bob back at the dam.

"What a fool I was not to take Bob's advice and keep to the main road!" he thought. "Well, sitting here won't help me any," and getting up he looked about, wondering which way to go.

Suddenly he heard a distant bell. He listened and heard it again. It sounded like a cow bell. "That ought to give me my direction," he thought. "At any rate I'll see if I can't locate it."



Following what seemed to be the direction of the sound, Fred at length found himself in a cattle path. It was much overgrown and in places was full of holes, but it seemed likely to lead out to some human habitation. Every now and then he stopped to listen and after a time he heard the bell sound a little nearer. Presently the road grew wider and clearer; then it skirted an open field. Darkness had set in now, and the stars were beginning to appear. Fred knew that it must be after eight o'clock. What was Bob doing, he wondered? A few minutes later he saw the outlines of some big farm buildings loom up between him and the western sky. Then he came to a barred gate. Opening it he found himself in a barnyard. A dog barked. Several voices called to him. Then a lantern flashed in his face and somebody spoke sharply. It was a burly farmer, and he looked at Fred suspiciously. Hurriedly Fred told who he was and asked where he could find the sheriff.

"Now what do you want of the sheriff, young feller?" asked the farmer.

"There's a Bolshevik plot to blow up the Park Lake Reservoir," replied Fred, "and I came to get a posse to stop it."



The farmer stared at him incredulously. "Now how do you know that?" he asked.

Breathlessly Fred told him what he had learned. The farmer was impressed. "By gosh!" he exclaimed. "Well, now, ain't they the critters! If that's your business, young feller, I'll go right along to the sheriff with you. I'm a depity, myself."

So saying he strode into the house with Fred at his heels. A minute or two later they emerged, the farmer shotgun in hand, on their way to the sheriff's. A few doors down the street they found him hanging over his front gate talking with a neighbor. In a few hurried sentences Fred told his story. The sheriff was a man of action.

"Call up what boys you can git on my 'phone, Reuben," he said to his "depity," "while I git my gun and crank up the car."

Ten minutes later the sheriff's Ford, loaded down with a boy and six men armed with shotguns and Winchesters, was dusting down the road from Butler toward the reservoir.

It was quarter to nine!



## CHAPTER XIX

### HANDS UP!

FOR a minute or two after finding that the telephone wires had been cut Bob sat in dismay on the floor in the darkness of the little shack. There seemed to be nothing that he could do except wait for Fred to arrive with help. And Fred should soon be here. Cautiously Bob turned on his torch and looked at his watch. It was half-past eight! Fred must have reached Butler and was probably even now on his way back to the reservoir with a sheriff's posse.

As he turned out his torch he thought, as he had thought a hundred times before, what a good imitation it was of an automatic pistol. And then all at once, a thought struck him. "Couldn't I fool the Bolshevik with my flashlight?" He was so carried away with the idea that all fear and nervousness for the moment completely left him. The whole thing suddenly ap-



peared in the light of a desperate game. He was up against an outlaw and he would beat him. "We'll fool the Red, Joe Miller," he said to himself. "We'll capture him, by gum, before the sheriff gets here."

Bob silently tiptoed out of the house. Near the door he listened a moment. There was not a sound except a slight rustling of the leaves and the chirping of the crickets. "The man might be already fixing his fuses," he thought. Stealthily he made his way to the end of the dam. Here he stopped and listened again. After a few seconds he heard a distant whistling from the other side of the reservoir. Evidently the policeman was getting nervous. Walking out on the dam a short distance he looked down over the railing that protected the footway and listened again. At first he heard nothing; then a faint clinking and tapping sounded below him. His heart beat rapidly. Doubtless the Red was setting his explosive. Now what was the best thing to do? Probably there was a path leading down from the end of the dam, and very likely the man had his wires trained along that path. If he could only find it!

Stepping carefully Bob made his way back to



the end of the dam. Then getting down on his hands and knees he began to feel his way along over the ground. At length he came to a smooth place. Here was a path, but was it the right one? Still stooping and feeling his way he followed it and soon discovered that it led into the woods below the dam. At this discovery Bob's heart began to thump again. He was on the trail! A few feet further on the path turned to the left and descended more steeply. He had to proceed very carefully now. In places the footing was soft and there were loose stones that might be set rolling and make a noise. How far down the path should he go? Just where was the Bolshevik setting his bomb? Bob remembered that he had spoken of blowing up the wall by the sluice. This was not far from the end of the dam and formed the weakest part of it. The plan probably was to place the charge near the sluice so as to blow it out and break the dam. This would release all the water and inflict damage that would require weeks of repair work.

After fumbling about the ground on both sides of the path Bob's fingers suddenly touched something queer. It was the wires! They would lead him to the Red! Stealthily he crept along.



Although there was no moon it was a clear night, and now that his eyes had grown used to the darkness he could distinguish objects slightly about him. He could make out the great black bulk of the dam up at his left against the starlit sky, and he could tell from the noise of the water that he was now near the sluice. He felt again for the wires. They were there all right. As he followed them along a few feet farther he suddenly found that they turned sharply to the left. They were leading him up toward the dam. At this discovery Bob paused. He realized what chances he was taking—he an unarmed boy against an experienced and desperate man. For a moment he was troubled—but only for a moment. Then his courage rose, and with every nerve taut, ears strained to hear the slightest sound, eyes striving to pierce the darkness, he crept slowly forward, following the wires.

A minute later, when Bob stopped to listen, he heard a noise at hand. Peering through the darkness he made out a faint glow in the bushes just ahead. He crept nearer. Yes, there was his man! He was working on hands and knees in the main wall of the dam close beside the sluice





“HANDS UP!”







with his flashlight so arranged that it gave out very little light.

"Now, Joe Miller," Bob said to himself, gripping his torch, "go to it, boy."

Fortunately there was a thick clump of laurel growing out of the rocky hillside near the path not more than a dozen feet behind the Bolshevik. Bob crept up and crouched in the bush. Between him and his opponent the path was clear. A few steps and he would be upon him. With a quick glance Bob measured the ground. He could not afford to stumble or to make a misstep. He gripped his torch. His hand was trembling. He looked at the big, broad back of the Bolshevik. The man had thrown off his coat, and it lay on the ground near by. Suddenly Bob noticed something protruding from the hip pocket of the kneeling man. In an instant his plan was formed. Gathering himself together he rushed forward. With one hand he jabbed the end of his torch into the back of the kneeling figure, and with the other he jerked an automatic pistol from the man's hip pocket.

"Hands up!" he called in a voice so fierce it surprised him.

He heard the man take a quick breath. The



next instant the Red turned in the half-light and looked into the muzzle of his own automatic. "Put 'em up quick!" commanded Bob. He was amazed at his own coolness.

Slowly the man forced his trembling hands above his head.

"Now," whispered Bob hoarsely, "if you start anything I'll shoot."

Transferring the automatic into his right hand and holding his torch with his left, he turned on the light.

"There!" he said. "Now, about face. Forward march." Poking the automatic sharply into the fellow's back he pushed him ahead. The man's silence was reassuring. He seemed to be afraid that Bob might shoot him in the back without warning. So they proceeded along the narrow path, gradually climbing the bank of the ravine until at length they reached the edge of the bushes at the end of the dam.

Here it suddenly occurred to Bob that if they came out into the open the guard might see them. It would be best to keep under cover till the posse came. "Hold on," he said. "We'll wait here for a minute."

The prisoner stopped obediently. He had



given no trouble so far. Bob had taken good care to keep always behind him, covering him with the automatic and the flashlight. He wondered if the man realized that he had been captured by a boy.

All of a sudden Bob thought he heard a distant sound. He listened intently. Yes, there could be no mistake. It was the humming of a motor car. It grew louder. Presently two bright lights flashed up the road.

"Who's that?" asked the prisoner, speaking for the first time. He started to lower his hands.

"Keep 'em up!" cried Bob, as he thrust the muzzle of the automatic sharply between the man's shoulder-blades.

A moment later the car dashed in front of the shack and half a dozen men leaped out. The Special, wondering who the new arrivals were, came running across the dam. Bob prodded his captive again in the back. "March!" he said. The fellow stumbled forward. A little later Bob came with his prisoner into the full glare of the headlights of the sheriff's Ford to find Fred holding the Special's Krag and the sheriff snapping a pair of handcuffs on the man.

"Wall, I vum!" exclaimed the sheriff.



Fred's eyes were big with astonishment. At last he exclaimed, "Well, Bob, you're a good Scout all right, and you sure deserve a medal."

Half an hour later the two prisoners were locked securely within the brick walls of the Butler jail and Fred and Bob were sinking into slumber in a big feather-bed in the sheriff's house. The boys had at first declined the sheriff's offer of a night's lodging, but it was the sheriff's wife, a stout, motherly woman, who had refused to let them leave the house.

"Do you think I'm a-goin' to let you boys sleep outside while I've a clean feather-bed that nobody's a-usin'?" she demanded. "Specially considerin' what you've done? I guess not."

And so ended the first day of the hike.



## CHAPTER XX

### THE END OF THE HIKE

BOB and Fred are hardly to be blamed if they failed to awake as early as usual next morning. Their strenuous experiences of the preceding day made them sleep soundly and long, and the tender-hearted sheriff's wife refused to wake them until the last moment.

"Let 'em sleep, bless their hearts," she said. "They ain't nothin' but boys, and jest think what they went through yesterday!"

And so they slept until the sheriff's wife, keeping sharp watch of the kitchen clock, had to call them so that they would be ready in time for the hearing before the local court. The sheriff himself looked in on them as they sat at the table enjoying a hearty breakfast of ham and eggs. He beamed with satisfaction and importance as he stood with his hat on in the big room that served as kitchen and dining-room.

"Feelin' rested?" he asked.



"Yes, indeed, sir, first rate," chorused the boys.

"You ain't off your feed any so fur as I can see," he remarked with a chuckle.

"Not so you'd notice it," said Bob, laughing. "Who could be before such a breakfast as this?"

"Well," replied the sheriff, shaking his head smilingly, "there may be better cooks than my wife, but I ain't never seen one."

"Now, John," remonstrated his wife, "don't brag. I guess these young gentlemen is used to good livin'."

They soon finished breakfast and set out for the court. This was held in the musty office of the only magistrate in town, Judge Withers, who combined the activities of attorney-at-law with those of real estate and insurance agent. The news of the hearing had made a great stir and the sheriff and the boys forced their way with difficulty through the crowd that overflowed from the inside of the office out around the door.

The hearing was interesting and at times thrilling. The boys told their story in detail. The explosive and the electric mechanism for setting it off were produced in court. Then, to make the case more conclusive, the bribed Special, in



the hope of saving his own neck, confessed his part in the plot, declaring that he did it in order to get out of debt. So it happened that in the course of a couple of hours the Red, who gave his name as Karl Nivilski, was bound over for trial at the next term of the county court and was taken away to be confined in the county jail. With him departed the bribed policeman.

The only newspaper in town told of several similar plots to destroy property in different parts of the State. In only two cases were they successful, however, and more than a hundred Reds had been rounded up at the last minute.

The boys were the heroes of the occasion, and now that they were free to continue their hike, they found it hard to get away from their hospitable admirers. The judge himself, throwing aside official dignity, urged them to postpone their hike for a day, and offered to take them fishing. Several of the villagers insisted on carrying them back to the Scout camp by automobile. The boys laughingly but politely declined these offers, explaining that they were sent on the hike by their Scout Commissioner and that duty called for them to complete their journey, so far as possible, according to schedule.



They accepted the invitation of the sheriff's wife to have dinner, however, as it was noon by the time they were free, and their recollection of the good breakfast they had eaten was vivid and pleasant. Before setting out they sent a telegram to Mr. McGregor, telling him that they had been delayed and would in consequence be a day late in returning to camp. They added that they were all right and that there was no need for him to worry.

After the wonderful experience of their first day the remainder of their hike seemed very tame. The weather was perfect, their spirits were high, and they found each other more congenial than ever. There was nothing to cast the smallest shadow over their enjoyment.

This was the first time that Bob had ever been thrown on his own resources for so long a time, and it was a wonderful experience. He felt a keen sense of his responsibility and at the end of the day as he lay out under the stars wrapped up in his blanket he felt a strong feeling of satisfaction. "Yes, Joe Miller," he said to himself, "when a fellow is alone he has to paddle his own canoe."

The boys reached the Scout camp on the even-



ing of the fourth day just as the camp-fire was being lighted. Mr. McGregor greeted them warmly.

"I've been expecting you every minute during the last two hours," he said. "I have been counting on you to entertain us this evening with the story of your trip. But I suppose you haven't had supper yet."

"Oh, yes," said Fred. "When we found we were going to be late we stopped and had a bite by the roadside. We can hold out till morning, I guess."

Reddy, the Egg, and their other friends crowded about the boys with warm greetings. "How's the snake-charmer?" asked the Egg, with a friendly grin as he gripped Bob's hand.

"Fine and dandy," replied Bob.

"What made you a day late?" asked Reddy.

"You couldn't guess right if you tried for a year," said Bob.

"Oh, quit your kidding, Tenderfoot!"

"It's a sure thing," put in Fred. "The fact is the Tenderfoot has scored again."

At this Mr. McGregor glanced up quickly. "What's this about our Tenderfoot scoring again?" he asked.



"Tell him, Bob," urged Fred.

And so while the whole camp listened with eager ears Bob told the story of their adventures from beginning to end. When he finished there was silence for a few seconds; then came a wild burst of cheering and hand-clapping. Bob had been popular before, and though he was only a Tenderfoot he had become a leader at the camp. Now he was looked upon as a hero. He had been a good Scout. He had stood the test when the trial came. He had faced death without hesitation and by his courage and nerve he had triumphed.

Mr. McGregor was enthusiastic in his congratulations. "Guess I'll have to report you to Headquarters, my boy," he said. "It's beyond my authority to honor you adequately for such service as you've done. However, I can take a little credit to myself for giving you that electric torch. If you hadn't had that in your kit your courage might not have been quite so good, eh?"

Bob shook his head and smiled. "Maybe not," he replied.

"I believe Bob would have found some way to catch the fellow," said Reddy McTurk, "even if he had been obliged to finish him off with a stone



the way David did Goliath. Believe me, Bob is some wizard. Look at the way he fooled us with Si Turtelotte's old horse."

It was no use to think of breaking up the camp-fire at the usual hour that night. The boys had so many questions to ask that they kept Bob talking long after the usual bedtime. Instead of sending them off to their tents, Mr. McGregor announced that Taps would be sounded half an hour later than usual, and then surprised them by producing an enormous box of marshmallows which he declared were in need of toasting. There was an instant stampede to cut twigs to toast with, and then everybody sat about the camp-fire chatting and eating sweetmeats until the last bugle sent them off to bed.

The remaining two weeks of camp sped swiftly, and at last the day came when they were to leave. Tents were struck, blankets rolled up, cots folded and kits packed, and after many tiresome trips between the camp and the Ark everything was at last stored in the trailer or in the motor cars of Mr. Callahan.

Bob had gone to camp to spend a week or ten days to see how he liked it. He had ended by spending two months. He had gone doubtfully,



not feeling at all sure that he should like the Scouts or the life at camp. Now he was a Scout himself. It had been a great summer and he had never felt so well in his life. He was hard as nails, his muscles were firm and his head clear. He had gained a new confidence in himself. He had no regrets now about missing the Adirondacks or the seashore resorts that he had formerly visited. He had gone to the camp largely because he liked Fred Ashleigh, and he had felt doubtful about the other boys that he might meet. With a smile he thought of his old high school friends—of “Nellie” Paynter, who had jeered at the idea of his going to the Scout camp, and of Ted Patrick, who had warned him against joining the Scouts because it would interfere with his getting into a school “frat.” How silly their opposition seemed now. They simply did not know what the Scouts stood for. They did not understand the meaning of the Scout activities. Well, he was a Scout now, and it would be his duty in the future to help the movement.

As for the school “frats,” what did he care for them anyway? He was a member of Beaver Patrol. If he could not be a “frat” member and a Scout too, so much the worse for the “frats.”



Bob was roused from his thoughts by Reddy McTurk's voice, "Wake up, Bob! Wake up. Come on, fellows, a cheer for the Scout camp."

The cheers were given with a will as the boys all craned their necks to get a last look at the little valley. Then the Ark plunged over the crest and Glen Gray was lost to sight.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE HONOR MEDAL

THE fall term of the Cedarville High School was well under way and Bob Hanson was hard at work with his studies. Somehow he found himself facing the new school year with a different spirit. In the past he had never cared much whether he had high marks or not; nor had he hesitated at wasting time with idle companions. In fact, most of his former close friends believed that it was rather against a fellow to get high marks. It showed that you were either a greasy grind or a teacher's pet; and one was about as bad as the other. Bob now realized that his school duties were something to be performed as well as possible, and that a good record in his studies would reflect as much credit on him as a good record in swimming or any other Scout activity. It was all a matter of doing your best at whatever task that was set before you. And so



there was no time for idling; nor did he feel any liking for idlers. Ted Patrick, "Nellie" Paynter, and the rest had ceased to interest him, and after a few attempts to keep him in their little circle they gave up the task as hopeless. "You're dippy on that Scout stuff, Bob," said Ted Patrick one day. "You better chuck it before it's too late. You'll be sorry if you don't."

"You don't need to worry if I don't," replied Bob, smiling.

Ted Patrick scowled. "I don't know what's got into you, Bob," he said. "You seemed to have the making of a good 'frat' man in you, but you're hopeless now. What you see in that Scout bunch I can't make out."

One morning several weeks later after the opening of school, Bob received notice from Scout Headquarters asking him to report at a meeting of the Court of Honor a few days later. On mentioning the matter to Fred he learned that it was a regular autumn meeting at which honors were announced and medals awarded to Scouts who had distinguished themselves in any conspicuous way. "You don't want to miss it, Bob," he said. "It's something to see. There are always some high mucky-mucks from Head-



quarters present, and the Mayor is usually there and makes a speech. It's quite a grand occasion."

"We wear our uniforms, of course," said Bob.

"Sure! Doll yourself up to the limit."

The night of the meeting Bob was on hand at Scout Headquarters with about a hundred and fifty other Scouts, and their Scoutmasters. While they were awaiting the order to march into the auditorium Mr. McGregor appeared with a paper from which he read the names of a dozen or fifteen boys.

"These boys will drop out of the ranks and take seats on the stage with me," said the Commissioner. "The others will sit in the front rows on the floor facing the stage." Bob's name was included in the list.

The events of the next few minutes were for Bob rather confused. Somehow he found himself on the stage in the brilliantly lighted auditorium, sitting in a row with other Scouts. In the center of the stage sat Mr. McGregor with the Mayor on his right and Judge Andrews, of the Court of Honor, on his left. At first he was too confused to look at the audience, but by degrees his embarrassment wore off and he ventured to



glance about the room. The Scouts belonging to the various troops in town were all seated in the first few rows, while behind them were a few townspeople, evidently invited guests. As Bob looked them over he thought for a moment that he saw his mother in one of the back rows. But when he looked again he concluded that he must be mistaken. If she had intended to come, she would have said something about it. Just then the Commissioner rose and began to speak, and Bob's thoughts turned to other things.

After a brief speech by the Mayor Mr. McGregor read the names of the boys who were to receive badges or medals for unusual services, and as their names were read the boys came forward to the center of the stage and their medals were pinned on their coats by Judge Andrews. Bob's turn came last. When his name was called he somehow stumbled over to the center of the stage where he stood with shaking knees before Mr. McGregor. The Commissioner smiled at him encouragingly. So did the Mayor and Judge Andrews.

"Stand up straight, Scout Hanson," said Mr. McGregor. "I want everybody to have a good look at you. He's more afraid of us than



he was of the Bolshevik," added the Commissioner laughingly to the Mayor and the Judge. Mr. McGregor's words and the friendly looks of the Mayor and the Judge made him feel more at ease.

"Scout Hanson," continued the Commissioner, "has been recommended for one of the greatest honors in the gift of the Court of Honor, a decoration rarely awarded and then only for service calling for the highest courage."

Bob could feel his face getting redder and redder.

"Although only a Tenderfoot of a month's standing and but newly acquainted with the ideals and duties of the organization, Scout Hanson proved himself equal to an emergency of the most serious character. Having discovered a plot to blow up a reservoir, he dared to risk his life to capture the would-be perpetrator of the crime and actually succeeded in doing so and in turning him over to the officers of justice. It was a deed that many a grown man would have hesitated to undertake, and which, if executed with less resolution or courage, might have failed or even have caused his own death. By his unshrinking courage he saved enormous property



loss and aided in bringing to justice a desperate enemy of his country and of mankind. The Court of Honor has unhesitatingly awarded to him the silver medal of honor, the first time that this medal has ever been awarded in this district."

Mr. McGregor and the Mayor shook Bob's hand vigorously. Judge Andrews pinned the medal on his coat, and amid tremendous hand-clapping and cheering Bob made his way back to his seat. Then before he realized it, the meeting was over, the Scouts had filed out, and he was following the Commissioner, the Mayor, and the Judge down the steps leading from the stage to the floor of the hall.

As he reached the floor a lady ran forward and threw her arms round his neck. "Oh, Bob, Bob! I'm so proud of you!" she cried.

"Mother! You here!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, and somebody else, too," said a deep bass voice. And looking up Bob saw his father standing close beside him, his face beaming with pride.

"Why, Dad, I thought you were in Washington," exclaimed Bob.

"So I was, youngster, but when I got your mother's letter telling me that you were to be



given a medal to-night I couldn't help running over to see that the job was properly done."

Bob stared. "So you knew I was to get a medal, Mother?" he asked in surprise.

Mrs. Hanson smiled. "Yes, indeed," she said. "Mothers have a way of finding things out that you boys know nothing about. I've known it for several days and I can't tell you how proud I am of you."

"I don't deserve any credit, Mother. I only did my duty as a Scout," said Bob, and he repeated the words of the Scout Law: "A Scout is brave. He has the courage to face danger in spite of fear."

Mrs. Hanson smiled. "Ah, Bob," she said, "it's a wonderful thing to have ideals to live up to, and it's still more wonderful to succeed in living up to them. In becoming a Scout you have certainly joined a noble army of boys. It has done a lot for you and I have no doubt that it will do more as time goes on."

"Yes, Mother, I'm only a Tenderfoot now, and I shan't be satisfied until I'm a first class Scout and have my sleeve covered with merit badges. I'm going to climb to the top."

Mr. Hanson smiled. "That's the right



spirit, Bob," he said. "You've made a good start and I'm proud of you; don't rest satisfied with what you've done. Prepare yourself for greater responsibilities and wider fields of effort. Be ready for anything that comes."

"In other words, follow the Scout motto, 'Be Prepared,' " said Bob, smiling.

The Books in this Series are:

BOB HANSON, TENDERFOOT

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